WESTERN BREEZES

OR

BALLADS OF A GRINGO

BY

RANDOLPH HENRY ATKIN

ornia
al

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Floyd W. Georgeson

Christobal, Panama

May 1916.

WESTERN BREEZES

OR

BALLADS OF A GRINGO

BY

RANDOLPH HENRY ATKIN

1914

Copyright, 1914, by
Randolph H. Atkin

All rights reserved

PS
3501
A867w

To

My many Friends

in

Colon and Panama

612983
LIBRARY

NOTE: The word "Gringo" is used in Latin American countries to denote a foreigner, more especially an American or an Englishman. It has long lost its tone of depreciation, and in fact is often used now in terms of affection. There are many reasons given as to the origin of this word, but the one generally accepted is that years ago, during the war between the United States and Mexico, the American soldiers used to sing a marching song, viz., "Where the Green Grass Grows," and the Mexicans—having so often heard this song sung by the victorious American troops when they marched into a town,—twisted round the words "green grass grows" until they got the term "gringo". This word is now used all over Central and South America.—THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Adelita 137
Adiós 154
Adiós Southern City 76
Beachcomber, The 72
Caballero, The 46
Colón 10
Cousins 26
Ditch, The 24
Dolores 134
El Mestizo 60
Greenhorn, The 78
Gringo Cemetery, The 69
Gringo's Dream, The 113
Gringo's Growl, The 105
Havana 130
Homesick 118
In the Shade of the Cocoanut Palm 81
Land of Comic Opera, The 50
Litany of the Tropical Tramps 99
Lure of the Tropics 110
Man, A 34
Mañana 48

CONTENTS

	PAGE
'Neath Palms of Old Colón	14
On the Way to Bogotá	29
On the Road to Arequipa	91
Panama	21
Passing of a Day, The	129
Payta	53
Piura	56
Send Me West	6
Señorita, The	44
Son of a Gun	121
Song—The Typical Tropical Tramp	103
To My Chum	126
Una Canción (Fair Panama)	18
Wooings of a Gringo, The	115

WESTERN BREEZES
OR
BALLADS OF A GRINGO

Holy Guide of Bethlehem's Star,
Whose loving arm is stretched afar,
'Neath oceans deep, o'er mountains high,
Across wide plains, from earth to sky,
Guide safely to Thy heav'nly home
Those dear to us who distant roam.

O God, who hast Thy children led
'Cross Egypt's sands, through Jordan's bed,
'Till they on mountain top did stand
And viewed afar the Promised Land,
O lead them to Thy happy home,
Those dear to us who distant roam.

Light of the world to Thee we pray,
Choose thou their paths from day to day;
As through the night asleep they lie,
Be thou, dear Lord, forever nigh,
The way light to thy Father's home
For those dear ones who distant roam.

SEND ME WEST

Send me West across the Isthmus
To that land where men are Men,
I am sick and tired of pushing
Day by day an office pen.
I am weary of this England
With its pride and poverty,
Where they cringe to all above them
And then boast of liberty,
Where to keep up an appearance
As fine gentlemen they seek,
Outward show and empty stomachs
Earning twenty bob a week.

Send me where God's earth's not rented
By an aristocracy,
And the middleclass not seething
With a rank hypocrisy.
Send me where a man can labour
With his coat off for his keep,
Send me where it makes no difference
If your father's prince or sweep.
Where your caste is what you make it,
Never mind your pedigree,
And where all men rank as equals,
That's where I should like to be.

Send me West, my blood is frozen
And the ague racks each bone,
Better far, with burning fever
Pounding through each vein, to groan,
In that land of dazzling morning,
And of crimson setting sun,
Of the cool refreshing breezes
When the scorching day is done.
Where the tropical *cielo* [1]
Is ablaze with myriad lights,
Homage paying to the *luna* [2]
As she paints those glorious nights.

Send me where the dew of *noche* [3]
Deep the sun-baked earth does steep,
Where the hum of growing nature
Softly lulls a man to sleep,
Where the fire-flies in the thousands
Flitt'ring through the night one sees,
Seeming like the lights of fairies
Twinkling 'neath the palma trees
Where the mountain tiger's roaring
On the deadened senses falls,
And the midnight cries of pumas
In one's dreams seem distant calls.

1—Sky. 2—Moon. 3—Night.

In that land of dark-eyed maidens
Daughters true of Mother Eve,
Whose forms of perfect beauty
With the ruling passion seeth,
In that land of dark-skinned *hombres* [4]
Modelled from old Adam's clay,
Tasting e'er of Eden's apple,
Where they can and when they may.
Where romance is not forgotten
In the sexes' rivalry,
And where women still are subject
To the laws of chivalry.

O to hear the *gallos* [5] crowing
As the ruddy day appears,
And the chapel's old *campana* [6]
Loudly clanging in mine ears.
Just to hear a *burro* [7] wailing
To salute the smiling morn
Or, in short, the pandemonium
Of a stifling tropic dawn.
Just to feel the hush of noonday
Lying deeply over all,
Cov'ring mountain, town and valley
With its deathlike silent pall.

4—Men. 5—Cocks. 6—Bell. 7—Donkey.

Oh to feel the breath of freedom
And to hear those breakers roar,
As they ever dash in fury
'Gainst that stern Pacific shore.
Once again to bear the baking
Of a parched Peruvian plain,
Or to feel the body tingle
'Neath an Ecuadorian rain.
Once again to lie full sweating
Through a Panamanian night,
Or to shiver in Bolivia
'Cross its mountains gleaming white.
Send me West across the Isthmus
Out towards the setting sun,
Where the wondrous joys of living
Free as air, are to be won.
Through the deafening roar and bustle
Of this whirling factory,
Voices come from out the Westward
Calling, ever calling me.
To that land of blazing sunlight
Where the stately palmas grow,
To that Coast of dazzling moonlight
Where the western breezes blow.

COLÓN

On a patch of mud and sand
Live a small perspiring band,
    Who mourn their fate as slow the years roll on
They're a sweating, thirsty crew,
Who have learned to ever rue
    The day they 'cast their anchors' in Colón.

Now this particular spot,
By the sun baked scorching hot,
    Looks out upon the broad Caribbean sea,
Up from which a cooling breeze
Comes to sway the palma trees
    As the moon from her day prison rises free.

And the wide expansive bay,
Heated by the glare of day,
    Each night puts on a cloak of fleecy down,
While the 'crew' on shore awake
With fierce burning thirsts to slake,
    In wet saloons which overflow the town.

In those blazoned booze resorts
Men are met of many sorts,
    There's the Tourist green, the Toiler and the
        Bum,

Ev'ry man shouts when he speaks,
While the atmosphere foul reeks,
With whiskey, planter's punch and fiery rum.

A piano's tinkling sound,
Fills the stifling air around,
Then a woman's voice pipes forth a well-known song,
While the chorus, strong and free,
Sung in doubtful harmony,
Proves the lungs which to those revellers belong.

Near across the moonlit way
Stands a club upon the bay
Where you'll meet the Exiled Gringos of the Zone,
Angels' wings they'll never wear,
Yet they've hearts beyond compare,
And as men true to their friends they stand alone.

They won't ask your race or creed,
If you're of a manly breed,
That's enough for them, they'll take you by the hand.

And to be a landed lord,
No advantage would afford,
It's *men* they seek, not titles, in that land.

If by chance their aid you claim,
They won't study class or name,
If a 'stranger' then a helping hand they'll lend.
They are *gentlemen* right through,
They are whites of whitest hue,
You'll be proud, like I, to call each one your friend.

In that land you'll get to know,
Of a place called Navaho,
Where the Birds of Paradise have built their nests.
As you walk its crowded street
Many sounds the ear do greet,
Music, singing, laughter loud at shady jests.

In those painted faces there
Lurks dark mis'ry past compare,
Though those Birds of Paradise seem always gay.

It's a smile they've got to keep,
Yet they'd give their lives to weep,
As the loathsome mire engulfs them day by day.

And a noisy dance saloon
Sends up screeches to the moon,
Near a betting-booth where 'sharks' a harvest reap.
While a fetid hindoo pen,
Hides from sight an opium den,
Where drugged and senseless men and women sleep.

These are entertainments found,
As you walk the patch around,
Can you wonder how men often go astray?
In those pits of sordid vice,
Where all things have got their price,
And a man his monthly earnings throws away.

Working hard throughout the day,
Drinking deep the night away,
Fast they tread the path towards the *panteón* [1]
But, though each man's steeped in sin,
Yet sweet Paradise he'll win,
There are Seats Reserved for dwellers in Colón.

1—Pantheon.

'NEATH PALMS OF OLD COLÓN

Far back in the darkened ages,
  Long centuries ago,
Across the narrow Isthmus
  A Western breeze did blow.
High o'er the festooned jungle
  Ten thousand seeds it bore,
Ten thousand priceless off'rings
  To fair Caribbean's shore,
And scatt'ring wide o'er plain and strand,
  Rich earth they fell upon,
Maturing quick—forth sprouted thick,
  Those palms of old Colón.

Down—down those mystic ages
  They raised their heads on high,
Surveying nought around them
  But forest, sea and sky.
Man's greed and dastard manners
  Scarred not sweet Nature's face,
Their thrones—the stretching pampas,
  Their kingdoms—endless space.
Proud rulers of deep solitude,
  While centuries rolled on
Through each decade—supreme they swayed
  Those palms of old Colón.

At last wild dusky children
  Encamped beneath their shade,
And stained those verdant pampas
  With sacrifices made
To many gods, rude modelled
  In stone, in wood and mud,
Believing in their blindness
  Those idols cried for blood.
That scene of calm retirement
  Of perfect peace, was gone
And wicked man his work began
  Neath palms of old Colón.

Years, years passed by—the pale face came
  With bloodier deeds in store,
Though teacher of the gentle Christ
  He waded deep in gore.
The left hand held a Bible
  The other gripped a sword,
Vile blackest Imp of Satan
  E'er praying to his Lord.
The weaker child of nobler mind
  Gave place to Spanish Don,
And Death held sway for many a day
  Neath palms of old Colón.

There men were bound and tortured
  With ne'er a chance to fight,
Young children torn from mothers
  And butchered in their sight.
While all man's savage instincts
  On that fair spot were found,
Slavery, rapine, murder,
  Composed the daily round.
Such sordid crimes of human kind
  The sun ne'er shone upon,
When Spaniard bold, in days of old,
  Was lord of old Colón.

But peace spread o'er those verdant plains
  Fierce bloody strife was done,
When Spanish rule was overthrown
  And freedom's cause was won.
Quick progress grew until at last
  Ope'd wide the Western Gates,
Though Frenchmen failed, proud Nature bowed
  To manhood from the States.
From year to year by day and night
  Their task they carry on,
'Twill never fade, such hist'ry made
  Neath palms of old Colón.

Yea, generations yet to come
  Will view that wondrous feat,
And stand with awe beside the spot
  Where oceans twain do meet.
For North and South, for East and West,
  'Twill be the entrance gate,
There—men from climes both far and wide
  Will ever congregate.
And while the sun on earth doth shine
  As long as life goes on,
They'll voice their praise, till end of days,
  Neath palms of old Colón.

UNA CANCIÓN (FAIR PANAMA)

Fair Panama—when Father Sun arises
  A mighty god from out his Eastern bower
To ever find his morning smile reflected
  By whitened shells on thy cathedral tower,
And rising high he bathes thy placid harbour
  Which throws aside the ghostly cloak of night,
Soon land and sea from Ancon to Tabóga
  Is one expanse of glitt'ring, dazzling light.

Awake, thy sons to one more day of labour
  Beneath the blaze of that oppressive sun,
Yet heed they not—the goal of their endeavours
  To sanctify the freedom they have won.
Great men are they—who through the strife of ages
  Did shed their blood—dire tyranny to cease,
And having gained—they raised their flag unsullied,
  An emblem true of liberty and peace.

Fair Panama—when Father Sun is seeking
  His western bower o'er far Tabóga Bay,
And thy cathedral bell in tones so mellow
  Rings to a solemn close the tropic day,

On gables white, on tow'ring palm and hilltop
At eventide the sun's rays brightly glint,
While Mother Earth, e'er dark'ning night approaches,
Wraps round herself a robe of golden tint.

Thy daughters fair—whose beauty stands unchallenged,
Enhance that scene until perfection reigns,
Their forms divine—are shrines of ev'ry virtue,
Their ready smile the stranger's heart enchains.
Each one a jewel rare in Nature's setting,
Each kindly heart pure as a mountain rill,
Dark silken hair and eyes which ever sparkle
Like that lone star which shines o'er Ancon hill.

Fair Panama—when Father Sun is sleeping,
And Luna meek comes forth to rule the night,
That lonely star o'er Ancon still is peeping
While blushing Earth quick dons her robe of white.
The ev'ning breeze with nodding palm is flirting,
A thousand stars wink boldly from above,
And sportive bay the virgin's sands is kissing,
All Nature shares with man those hours of love.

With my Beloved, when such a scene enwrapped us,
  Oft have I strayed by that encircling beach,
Foam-crested waves with stealth crept in to listen
  While we were whisp'ring secrets each to each.
Beneath that sapphire dome I won for ever
  The greatest prize in Life's abundant store.
What mem'ries sweet thou holdest in thy keeping!
  Fair Panama, I'll love thee evermore.

PANAMA

(The wail of a liverish gringo)

I don't know if you know it
  That land of fiery heat
Where for scorching up your eyebrows
  Not a place on earth can beat.
If you look upon the map you'll find
  They call it Panama,
The spot, which for its blinding heat,
  Eclipses hell by far.

You wake up in the morning
  And dress yourself perspiring,
The day's work being over
  You sweat when on retiring.
At midday the sun's blazing glare
  Seems like a blasted fire,
Of such a sizzling, swelt'ring clime
  The devil himself would tire.

To sleep at night's impossible,
  Full wide awake you lie,
Watching the flying cockroach
  Catching the buzzing fly.

At last when dawn is breaking
  For an hour or so you snore,
'Till the braying of a donkey
  Brings you back to earth once more.

Then your sweet rest it is ended
  For the church bells start to chime,
And ere they cease their blooming row
  To get up it is time.
Oh why should they a sleepy man
  Disturb with such a din!
Instead of saving him from hell
  They drive him further in.

For I am sure the language
  Which pours forth at such a time,
Is barred in good society
  And dared not be used in rhyme.
Now the Panamanian people
  Have hides of ev'ry shade,
And in those varied coloured skins
  Are men of ev'ry grade.

Americans and Britishers
  (Prime factors in the stew),
Spaniard, Greek and Turk,
  Chinaman and Jew.

All mixed up together
  In welt'ring perspiration,
Men of all religions,
  Sons of ev'ry nation.

'Tis the Hunting Ground of tourists,
  Of gringos steeped in sin,
Of whisky rank, Balboa beer,
  And evil smelling gin.
Of all the towns upon this earth,
  I on my oath will swear,
That none where money quickly flows
  To Panama compare.

And of one thing I am certain,
  That on Resurrection Day,
When the gringos from sweet Paradise
  Are sternly turned away,
That with their hearts a-breaking
  They'll not roam this earth afar,
But with smiles of satisfaction,
  They'll go back to Panama.

THE DITCH

On that Isthmus in the North or in the South,
Across the narrow Zone from East to West,
One only topic's found in ev'ry mouth,
And never gets by day or night a rest.
Be the speaker white or nigger,
Foreman, engineer or digger,
Be he of the 'silver' poor or 'golden' rich,*
The lone theme of conversation,
In the tongue of ev'ry nation,
Is what *Americanos* [1] call The Ditch.

Through the baking of a Panamanian day,
In Colón beneath the silver shining moon,
In each *plaza,*[2] private dwelling or café,
They talk about Culebra or Gatún.
Should you hear a pair conflicting,
Each maintaining, contradicting,
'Till you don't know who's the liar or what is which,
Do not think them rivals hating,
They are only friends debating,
That never ending question of The Ditch.

1—Americans.
2—City square.
* The workmen and lower mechanics are paid in silver, while skilled labor, office employees, etc., are paid in gold.

It is babbled with the new-born baby's breath,
Through life each one is recognized its slave,
'Tis murmured in the final throes of death,
And with choking sobs 'tis whispered at the grave.
When the chosen few arise,
And are sent to Paradise,
To tell the Lord about it they will itch,
While the others doomed to roast,
On the coals will squat and boast,
Of how they helped to dig that mighty Ditch.

COUSINS

Side by side we work together
  Remnants of a fevered band,
Each a fortune-seeking *gringo*
  Exiled from his native land,
Each to each in truest friendship
  Stretching forth a helping hand,
    For we're Cousins.

While at home they scoff at England
  Or abuse the mighty States,
While those lying politicians
  Stir the flame of petty hates,
They forget about us *gringos*
  Who live here as loving mates,
    Don't they Cousin?

We have pierced the festooned jungle,
  We have laid the magic rail,
Yea, as comrades true together,
  We have trod life's rugged trail,
So those 'stay-at-homes' endeavours
  To divide us now will fail,
    Won't they Cousin?

When across the wide Atlantic
  They descend to throwing mud,
And the papers help the ragings
  Of a friendship drowning flood,
We, the Exiles, scorn such pratings
  For we know the worth of blood,
    Don't we Cousin?

They were never stretched in suff'ring
  Far remote from home and friends,
Where the hum of foreign jargons
  With one's fevered ravings blends,
Know they not that God-sent comfort
  Which a Cousin's presence lends,
    To a Cousin.

We have pitched our tents together,
  From the selfsame dish we've fed,
Back to back when aught assailed us
  For a common cause we've bled,
We have gloried in our triumphs,
  Manly tears of grief we've shed,
    O'er a Cousin.

Here a gringo is a *gringo,*
  There is neither boast nor sham,
Be he from the Mother Country,
  Or the land of Uncle Sam,
Union Jack or Spangled Banner,
  Well it matters not a damn,
        We are Cousins.

ON THE WAY TO BOGOTÁ

Up the river Magdalena, on the way to Bogotá,
In a grimy *vaporcito* [1] smelling strong of grease
and tar,
With the paddle wheels a-chunking through the
waters high in flood
Breaking through the noonday silence, stirring up
the slimy mud,
Groaning engines ever pounding with a loud nerve-
racking thud.

Dodging floating rafts and dug-outs, skirting hid-
den shoal and bar,
Steaming forward, often stopping, backing with a
sudden jar,
Waking up the sleeping 'gator from its sun-baked
muddy bank,
Driving back the squirming rattler through the
rushes growing rank,
Bringing forth the croaking *ranas* [2] in the marshes
reeking dank.

1—Small steamer. 2—Frogs.

Underneath the coloured awning sit the passengers
and crew,
Sleeping half and half awakened in the broiling
heat they stew,
All attempts at conversation deep depression holds
in check,
Each surveys the tar in streamlets oozing from the
warping deck,
Each, with curses, wipes the sticky perspiration
from his neck.

Past the interlacing borders with a thousand
colours gay,
Where all Nature lies adozing through the stag-
nant heat of day,
Neath that blazing sun's oppression all is lifeless,
all is dead,
Hissing snake and prowling panther each has
sought its 'customed bed,
Nought is heard except the humming of mos-
quitoes overhead.

Sighting now an Indian village raised from off the
river's silt,
Where the naked pickaninnies wallow in the reek-
ing filth,

Steaming on—aroused from dozing by the steamer's sordant blast,
Yawning—cursing—gasping—sweating, 'till the scorching day is past,
And the sun, its heat exhausted, sinks beyond the forest vast.

Up the river Magdalena, on the way to Bogotá,
When the sun in wondrous splendour shoots its last rays from afar,
Over hill and tow'ring mountain, where alone the wild goats bleat,
Over soggy swamp and valley, where the steaming waters meet,
Piercing through the festooned jungle to the puma's dark retreat.

Soon the river turns to golden 'neath the sunset's ruddy glow,
Changing to a burnished copper as the sun sinks further low,
While the steamer ploughing onward leaves behind a glitt'ring streak
'Till it turns and seeks the shelter of a near-by hidden creek,
Falls that hush of tropic even when 'tis sacrilege to speak.

Quick the sombre shadows deepen and the night comes swiftly on,
Spreading wide its cloak of darkness ere the final rays have gone.
Then arises drowsy Nature from its coma deep of day,
Flitt'ring fireflies in the thousands round the river borders play,
Roaring beasts and chatt'ring monkeys in the forest hold their sway.

From the soft decadent rumble of the swiftly flowing stream,
To the screamings in the distance, where the puma reigns supreme,
Many sounds wake up the stillness, falling on the list'ning ear,
Some to sadden—most to frighten—only one, alas! to cheer,
'Tis the strains of *Annie Laurie* from the drunken engineer.

When at last, from sheer exhaustion, he *'lays himsel' to dee*
You spread your trav'lling *catre* [3] neath the top-deck canopy,

3—Cot (camp bed).

Hid within the hanging foldings of a thick mosquito net,
Musing half and half adozing through the stifling night you sweat,
Trying hard, with bye-gone mem'ries, present suff'rings to forget.

A MAN

Here! just stop that childish rot
About those dukes and earls,
  About those lords and knights with whom you've dined,
You think it will impress me,
But let me tell you, son,
  It only shows the smallness of your mind.

I'm going to put a question,
And to you it may seem queer,
  Yet try and give an answer if you can,
In all that high society
With whom you say you've mixed,
  Have you ever met what one could call A MAN?

A Man is not a 'johnny'
Who sponges on his dad,
  Then boasts about the blue blood in his veins,
Who talks about his racers,
And the amounts he drops,
  Or swanks about the sums at cards he gains.

Nor is he that Adonis
You read about in books,
  Who must be tall, blue-eyed with curly hair,
Who lives to rescue maidens
And gloats on daring deeds,
  But never 'dares' of work to do his share.

He needn't be a giant,
With eyes of steel-like blue,
  Nor need his fair hair curl upon his head.
The bravest man I've met with
In years along life's trail,
  Was short, grey-eyed, with hair a burning red.

No fam'ly tree to boast of,
No title to his name,
  With blood the self-same colour as his hair,
'Tis strange he had the courage,
(At least that's what you'll think)
  To die the noblest death beyond compare.

Yet he without a tremor,
Without the slightest fear,
  Did choose to die the vilest death that's known.
No battlefield's arena
With thousands looking on,
  But in a fetid plague camp . . . all alone.

No "mentioned in despatches"
Nor V.C. as reward,
  He heard no battle cry to urge him on,
The death he chose, so awful,
In tortures past belief,
  Would make *your* heroes shrink to gaze upon.

In Rico Port I met him,
(That death-trap of the Coast)
  Where ever lurks that vile bubonic pest,
He earned what's called 'good wages'
But lived upon the half,
  And to his poor old parents sent the rest.

Instead of idly sponging
On his parents for his keep,
  He helped to smooth their last days on this earth.
His eyes would fairly glisten
As he told me of his love,
  A woman sweet . . . the one who gave him birth.

Such actions form the basis
On which I judge a man,
  For first a man must be a worthy son,
Should he neglect his parents
A man he never is,
  No matter what great daring feats he's done.

Now Rico Port you know not,
Pray to God you never will,
  'Tis the spot from which all cleanliness has flown,
Along its fetid *calles* [1]
Stalks every foul disease
  Which to the human race was ever known.

The worst of them's bubonic,
That terrifying scourge,
  Which quickly strews its course with fest'ring dead.
At whose approach, with terror
Wild clutching at their hearts,
  Some of the bravest men have madly fled.

'Twas in the early eighties
I lived in Rico Port,
  When that foul plague swooped down upon the town,
In ev'ry house and *calle,*
Among the rich and poor,
  It cast its deadly *manta* [2] quickly round.

1—Streets. 2—Cloak.

Each house with dead or dying,
Rang loud with shrieks and groans,
  While thousands fled towards the open plain,
Men and women, little children,
Youth and maidens struggling on,
  Left putrifying corpses in their train.

Those horrors in the *ciudad,*[3]
God! shall ever I forget!
  The bloated dead lay round us ev'rywhere.
Yea! Dante's vile Inferno
With all its sordidness,
  Could never to those awful sights compare.

The sun beat scorching downwards
And from the corpses raised,
  A sick'ning stench polluting all around,
At night the starving *perros*[4]
Would gorge from off the dead,
  Which, as they fell, were left upon the ground.

At last a makeshift plague-camp
Was pitched outside the town,
  The horrors there mere words could not define.
No medical attendance,
Each person knew too well,
  'Twas certain death to cross that border line.

3—Town. 4—Dogs.

For once across that border,
Return you never could,
  Soldados[5] kept it guarded night and day,
Although free from infection
It mattered not to them,
  You'd entered there, and there you had to stay.

One night as I determined
To fly from that death spot,
  My hurried preparations I began,
When opened *la puerta*[6]
And there in the dim light,
  I saw a shrunken figure, 'twas . . . The Man.

How pale he looked, how haggard,
But it surprised me not,
  His body weak had borne a fearful strain,
For since the foul plague started,
He'd worked among the sick,
  A volunteer . . . no single thought of gain.

'Twas then, with expectation,
I urged a hurried flight,
  And begged of him that night to come with me,
To where, in my small *finca*[7]
I had upon the plain,
  We both from the vile *peste*[8] would be free.

5—Soldiers. 6—The door. 7—Farm or estate. 8—Plague.

Yet to my great amazement
He spoke of other plans,
  At hearing which my heart filled with despair,
He told me he'd decided
To enter that plague camp
  And give his aid to victims rotting there.

God! how I pleaded with him
And in the vilest terms,
  The horrors of that plague-camp I defined,
Yet, though full realizing
'Twould mean a tortuous death,
  To turn from his decision he declined.

No hopes of saving any
Within the fetid camp,
  He knew it would be foolishness to try,
To aid them in their suff'rings
Was *the* one hope he had,
  And for that end determined he to die.

I saw him to the border
On which a sentry stood,
  The plague camp in the moonlight glistened
    white,

My blood ran cold within me,
To hear those awful sounds,
  Which from that pest-hole rose up through the night.

A moan like distant breakers
Came faintly to our ears,
  A piercing shriek vibrated through the air,
A long loud cry of anguish,
A madman's frenzied laugh,
  Like a hyena springing from its lair.

And as he paused to listen,
His lips did tremble slight,
  But not from fear, a thing he never knew,
'Twas pity for those suff'rers
To whom came no relief,
  At death's approach their tortures only grew.

Again I pleaded with him
In hopes he'd change his mind,
  I offered him half of whate'er was mine,
But felt my hand gripped tighter,
Conveying silent thanks,
  And ere I knew he'd crossed the border line.

One day, a few months later,
When silence filled that camp,
  And vultures' beaks had picked the last bone bare,
Gone, risk of all infection,
From off those bleached remains,
  To enter there a few of us did dare.

I found what I was seeking
Stretched on a wooden plank,
  Around its neck there hung a golden chain,
Which was, he once had told me,
A mother's parting gift,
  To that brave son she ne'er would see again.

I dug a hole there for him
In that plague camp now he lies,
  Where suff'ring tortures vile he passed away,
His deed will be rewarded
When with his fellow men,
  He stands before his God on Judgment Day.

Then all blood will be equal
There'll be no rich or poor,
  A man will then be judged by what he's done.
Yea! millionaires and beggars,
Kings, knights and chimney-sweeps,
  Will all be on a level then, my son.

So stop that childish boasting,
It shows a servile breed,
  Which on this earth has cringed since life began,
And try just to remember,
The noblest Work of God,
  Is the proud title given to A MAN.

THE SEÑORITA

From the sands of Colón to the rocks of Cape Horn
In that land of bright moonlight and glittering
morn,
Where nature's proud beauties the landscape adorn,
Is the home of the fair *señorita.*

Those tresses recalling the blackness of night,
Bright eyes e'er aglow with a passionate light,
Though innocence shrouds with its virginal white,
The mind of the fair *señorita.*

Olives so rare on her forehead full blooming,
Roses blood red deep her sweet lips perfuming,
So radiant her smiles . . . the men ever dooming,
As slaves to the fair *señorita.*

Her voice e'er akin to the thrush's pure trill,
The air with sweet music seems ever to fill,
Sweeps over one's body a heavenly thrill,
At a word from the fair *señorita.*

How stately she walks . . . her figure unbending,
With glances so proud all advances defending,
Immune to the sighs of those gallants attending,
The will of this fair *señorita.*

A Venus divine she now reigneth alone,
Amazed at such beauty her rivals have flown,
While men of all nations have laid themselves prone,
At the feet of the fair *señorita.*

THE CABALLERO

He's a dark-skinned *caballero,*[1]
Wearing *capa*[2] and *sombrero,*[3]
  Immaculate as the proverbial pin,
With demeanour free and dashing,
Piercing eyes for ever flashing,
  To denote the fires of passion hid within.

Quick to see an insult offered,
To accept a friendship proffered,
  Through his veins the blood of many heroes flows,
Great esteeming his *amigos,*[4]
Hating deep all *enemigos,*[5]
  He's the best of friends . . . the deadliest of foes.

Fairy prince of ideal lovers,
Near the chosen maid he hovers,
  To attend her ev'ry whim . . . a gallant knight,
Should a rival dare to seek her,
He should buy a Colt's repeater,
  Or his chances of a life prolonged are slight.

1—Gentlemen. 2—Cape. 3—Hat (wide). 4—Friends. 5—Enemies.

Ev'ry night of the *semana,*[6]
Underneath her barred *ventana,*[7]
  While she dreams, he sings romantic songs of love,
Telling of her pretty *cara,*[8]
Strumming on his old *gitara,*[9]
  'Till the dawning streaks the darkened dome above.

And a world renowned *guerrero,*[10]
Is this Spanish caballero,
  From the strife of politics he'll never cease,
Thinking that man's evolution
Will be sped by revolution,
  He would rather die in war than live in peace.

Though his one fault . . . indecision,
Costs him bitter criticism,
  From the Anglo-Saxon races on this earth,
Still to this same *caballero*
Gladly lift I my *sombrero,*
  I have known him well and proved his sterling worth.

6—Week. 7—Window. 8—Face. 9—Guitar. 10—Guerilla fighter.

MAÑANA

(To-morrow)

In those little Republics down south of the Zone,
Where each of an army of *Generals* can boast,
Where each waits a pick of the Treasury bone,
And a President rules for a week at the most,
From the moment the sun tips the high standing palm,
And the first note is chirped by the earliest bird,
'Till the hour when the *luna* reigns silent and calm,
You hear e'er repeated one *spigetti*[1] word . . .
Mañana.

'Tis sown in their minds from the day they are born,
Full quick they acquire a philosophy deep,
The value of time is a truth which they scorn,
Their lives but an orgy of idling and sleep,
No hopes to inspire, of ambition bereft,
They lazily dream as the years roll away,
Excuses abundant for work to be left,
'Till the slow coming dawn of that mystical day . . .
Mañana.

1—Word used to signify anything native.

They arise . . . heavy-eyed . . . when the morn is
far spent,
To the sweltering blaze of a tropical sun,
With nothing accomplished yet fully content,
Retiring to sleep e'er the evening is done.
The women full weary of lolling all day,
Hard striving the god of *siestas* [2] to woo,
While their chivalrous mates in a neighb'ring café
Are gallantly boasting of what they will do . . .
Mañana.

Amigos [3] awaken! your musings forget,
To lay now a worthy foundation begin,
A name among nations you'll never beget,
As long as you're prone to this deadliest sin,
And more . . . . when you die and arrive at the
gate
Of Heaven, your place among angels to claim,
You'll find, as expectant you eagerly wait,
Saint Peter will open the door and exclaim . . .
Mañana.

2—Noonday sleep. 3—Friends.

THE LAND OF COMIC OPERA

(This does *not* apply to the reader's own country)

Of those countries fair near the Tropic Line,
Where the Trade Winds blow and the sun doth
shine,
Their characteristics you well define,
By terming them Comic Opera.

For a President new is elected each week,
His many supporters rich offices seek,
Quick causing the Treasury coffers to leak,
In those countries of Comic Opera.

Political Parties hold bitter their strife,
Though ever true courteous, hypocrisy's rife,
They proffer their friendship . . . whilst hiding a
knife,
In those regions of Comic Opera.

And fully aware to the height of their lot,
Their Parliament meets and discussions wax hot,
As to whether 'buck' niggers wear tall hats or not,
In those cities of Comic Opera.

Consisting their armies of Generals all,
(The number of Privates exceedingly small)
With uniforms gorgeous, just fit for a ball,
The same as in Comic Opera.

Full weary of rest a war is begun,
No lives are endangered and soon it is done,
For shamming to fight the uproarious fun,
It certainly beats Comic Opera.

Though law is maintained with abundance of noise,
A criminal hardened full freedom enjoys,
Policemen but venture to 'take up' small boys,
In those countries of Comic Opera.

They tell the whole world with a din and a blare,
Of deeds they've accomplished and what they will dare,
But don't you believe it . . . 'tis only hot air,
The same as in Comic Opera.

And so they go on from the day of their birth,
'Till the last act is o'er and they leave this cold earth,
To liven up Hell with hilarious mirth,
By playing at Comic Opera.

Amigos . . . once more I will give you my views,
Twixt th' right and th' wrong way of governing choose,
Quit playing at ruling or some day you'll lose,
Your countries of Comic Opera.

PAYTA

A cluster of huts on a sun-baked slope
  Looking out to a tranquil bay,
Where scattered around all the *gente* [1] mope
  Through the heat of a swelt'ring day.
And the *casas* [2] white, as they nestle there,
  Shine like gems in a monarch's crown,
While the sandy cliffs, as they rise up bare,
  On the scene far below them frown.

But when even comes, and the sun sinks low,
  Fades the blaze from those *casas* white,
Then the frowning hills scorn the scene below
  And smile in the shimmering light.
While a cooling breeze from the rippled sea
  Brings relief to the heated brow,
And those *two* palm trees of which Payta boasts,
  Slight their heads to its greeting bow.

Then the *gente* up from their musings wake,
  How they welcome the *brisa's* [3] call,
For they must their walk *de la tarde* [4] take,
  Ere the shades *de la noche* [5] fall.

1—People. 2—Houses. 3—Breeze. 4—Of afternoon. 5.—Of night.

Ah! those maidens fair, as they saunter round,
  Such praises their beauty invokes!
While the *plaza*[6] rings with a silv'ry sound,
  As they laugh at some gallant's jokes.

With the last rays gone, quick'ning night descends,
  For it knows how brief is its stay,
Then the waiting moon to her throne ascends,
  And the stars to her homage pay.
Soon the *plaza* fills with a jostling crowd,
  As round and around they parade,
While the *banda*[7] deadens the *bulla*[8] loud,
  By the laugh of those maidens made.

On the stroke of ten the *retreta*[9] past,
  They adjourn to their *casas* white,
Soon deep silence reigns, for in slumbers fast
  They repose through the peaceful night.
While the Paytan moon with a stealthy hand
  Spreads her cloak o'er the scene below,
'Till the tranquil bay and those plains of sand
  Seem wide *campos*[10] of glist'ning snow.

6—Square. 7—Band. 8—Noise. 9—Open air concert. 10—Fields.

Yet brief is the reign of this Paytan moon,
  She yields to a stronger power,
For out of the east there arises soon,
  The sun from his garnished bower.
Then the timid moon from his presence flies,
  As the rays touch the sandy hills,
And the morning star in its orbit dies
  As the earth with bright sunlight fills.

Soon the *gente* rise from a dreamless sleep,
  To a day in their idle lives,
For work is e'er left in *mañana's* [11] keep
  (*Mañana* it never arrives).
'Tis the poet's dream of a peaceful scene
  Far away from this world of strife,
Where the deaf'ning din of a struggle keen
  Enters not in its daily life.

Yet I envy them not in their *casas* white
  As they lie in the blazing sun,
They know not the thrill of a strenuous fight,
  Nor the joys of a victory won.
They feel not the glow of ambition's flame,
  Content for the morrow to wait,
Year end to year end their lives are the same,
  God spare me from such a like fate!

11—To-morrow's.

PIURA

Dusty Piura . . . heap of ruins,
  Worst of dull Peruvian towns,
Standing, where for miles around thee
  Nought but loneliness abounds.
Naked King of Desolation
  Reigning midst a desert plain,
May I perish in life's battle,
  'Ere I see thy face again.
Even God in desperation
  At thine idleness, no doubt,
Sent a direful *terremote* [1]
  From thy sloth to raise thee out,
Yet as bambu roofs and *muros* [2]
  Tumbled down about thy head,
Thou did'st wake but for a moment,
  On the ruins to place thy bed.
Now thou sleepest on serenely,
  No earthquake could thee appal,
Thou art happy in the knowledge
  That there's nothing left to fall.

1—Earthquake. 2—Walls.

As I gazed from my *ventana* [3]
  On thy couch, one sultry night,
Thy *casas* [4] looked like phantoms
  In the *luna's* pallid light.
And those sounds, which from my *cama* [5]
  Had aroused me, did not seem
As they filled the *negra noche* [6]
  To disturb thy slothful dream.
On the roofs of mud-built shanties,
  From which came a deaf'ning din,
Banners white were flown, denoting
  Chicha [7] vile was sold within,
And the drinkers of that *chicha,*
  As it sapped their weakened brains,
Driving them to frenzied madness,
  Pierced the night with hideous strains.
In a neighbouring *chicharia* [8]
  Young and old weird dances stepped,
While the *guaguas* [9] slung in hammocks
  Through it all oblivious slept.

On the reeking, muddy *suelos* [10]
  Others, filled with *chicha,* sprawled,
While the ants and *cucarachas* [11]
  O'er their prostrate bodies crawled.

3—Window. 4—Houses. 5—Bed. 6—Black night. 7—Native beer. 8—Beer shop. 9—Indian name for babies. 10—Floors. 11—Cockroaches.

On a sand heap near the doorway,
  Almost naked others lay,
Sweating heaps of men and women,
  Sleeping drink's effects away.
And near by some love-sick *cholos* [12]
  Native songs in chorus sang,
Aided in their serenading
  By an old *gitara's* twang.
While a crowd of starving *perros* [13]
  Sat and howled up to the moon,
And the drowsy *vigilantes* [14]
  Whistles raised in mournful tune.

Soon I turned from my *ventana,*
  I would, like the *guaguas,* sleep,
Useless proved my great endeavours
  To that good resolve to keep.
For the sounds came floating upwards,
  In a chorus long and loud,
'Till at last in desperation
  To its ruling power I bowed.
So I left my bed of *pulgas* [15]
  And my pent-up feelings cleared,
Gazing out through my *ventana,*
  Cursing deep 'till dawn appeared.

12—Indian countrymen. 13—Dogs. 14—Policemen. 15—Fleas.

As the rays *de la mañana*[16]
  Bathed in light the country round,
Those keen revellers *de la noche*
  Fell exhausted to the ground.

Then the morning air resounded
  With the *burros'*[17] harsh salutes,
While o'er fetid heaps of rubbish,
  Barking dogs held fierce disputes.
Soon my tortures reached a climax,
  For the sand clouds thick arose,
Threat'ning to destroy the eyesight,
  Quickly filling mouth and nose.
In one's boots and outer garments,
  In one's socks and underwear,
In each dish from soup to coffee,
  Grit abounded everywhere.
I had drunk my fill of Piura,
  In one night of wild *fiesta*[18]
That same day I fled to Payta,
  Leaving them in calm *siesta.*[19]

16—Of the morning. 17—Donkeys. 18—Feast. 19—Noonday sleep.

EL MESTIZO

(The Half-Caste)

In Peru I met and knew him,
As the biggest rogue on earth,
For in sin and crime he'd wallowed
Since his mother gave him birth.
And they called him *"El Mestizo"*,
No one knew his mongrel race,
There were traces of four nations,
In his evil looking face.
A sorry sight to gaze on
From his head down to his feet,
With a filthy, ragged *poncho* [1]
His whole wardrobe was complete.
And he never could keep sober,
He'd have pledged his soul for drink,
His breath for everlasting
Did of native *chicha* [2] stink.

He was drunk when first I saw him
Lying stretched upon the ground,
In a mantle of mosquitoes
With the sand-crabs crawling round.

1—Riding cloak. 2—Beer.

And as with my foot I roused him,
  His profane words filled the air,
As an expert in vile language,
  No one to him could compare.
Yes . . . he was that *El Mestizo*
  Full despised by one and all,
Who in deepest degradation
  Was as low as man could fall.
He had not a friend to turn to,
  Not a person cared a jot,
If he left this earth to-morrow,
  Drawn and quartered, hung or shot.

Still I never shall forget him,
  And the first place in my heart,
Will be for that old *Mestizo,*
  Until I this life depart.
But you'll wonder why . . . I'll tell you,
  Covered by that dirty hide
Was the finest pal I know of
  With a heart of gold inside.
He was only old *Mestizo,*
  With his blood of mongrel breed,
Yet he proved himself a hero,
  And the truest friend in need.

It was in the long dry season,
  When the sun beats scorching down,
And the hot winds sweep the *pampas* [3]
  Parching everything around.

That I rode from Guay to Piura,
  Across that sun-baked plain,
And as a mule attendant
  I'd Mestizo in my train.
He would work while I was watching,
  But as soon as I turned round,
He'd get that native *chicha*
  And he'd pour it steady down.
And although I kicked and cursed him
  It was all of little use,
In his sordid way of living
  He'd got hardened to abuse.
'Till one day in desperation,
  I gave him twenty full,
Then with my muzzling *lasso*
  Tied him to the hindmost mule.

From early dawn to sundown,
  As he staggered in our rear,
We could hear him crying, begging,
  Pleading for that native beer.

3—Wide stretching plains.

But not a drop we gave him,
  Though his tongue grew twice its size,
And the tortures of a madd'ning thirst
  Glared from his bloodshot eyes.
He was only El Mestizo,
  Who cared if he lived or died?
If he drop dead by the sand trail
  Not a man would turn aside.
One night, a long march over,
  Tired and weary I lay down,
When from my restless slumbers
  I was awakened, by the sound

Of my muleteers preparing
  For what seemed another ride,
So, my usual morning orders,
  To the leading guide I cried.
When I felt a cold steel muzzle,
  Pressed hard against my breast,
Instinct told me if I whimpered
  I'd have sought eternal rest.
And a *cholo* [4] stood astride me,
  Murder gleaming from his eyes,
Such a look of direst hatred,
  Not the bravest would despise.

4—Indian (Peru).

With a devilish grin he told me
  That they'd robbed all that I'd got,
And abandoned in that desert
  Was to be my dreadful lot.

Still another choice they gave me,
  If I longed sweet Heaven to gain,
They would help me on the journey
  With a bullet in my brain.
But I declined this offer,
  For life is always sweet,
While breath stays in the body,
  Nature fails to see defeat.
So they stripped me bare to nature,
  Binding tight my hands and feet,
And without drink, food or cov'ring,
  Left me in that burning heat.
There I lay intently list'ning,
  'Till their voices died away,
Then despair filled my whole being,
  And I cried for them to stay.

For was not a bullet better
  Than a long drawn tortuous death,
So I cried 'till hoarseness stopped me,
  But I might have saved my breath.

For the vultures' hideous croaking,
  As they specked the cloudless sky,
Was the only answer given
  To my last despairing cry.
There I lay . . . the fiery sun's blaze
  Boiled my very blood within,
And the sand-ants crawling o'er me,
  Slowly ate into my skin.
Then I felt my parched throat tighten,
  And began that raving thirst,
Which eclipsed all other tortures,
  Of my suff'rings 'twas the worst.

I prayed, cried, groaned and blasphemed,
  'Till delirium filled my brain,
Then I thought myself transplanted
  To my dear homeland again.
I could hear the old brook babbling,
  I could see the fountain play,
And the waterfall dash downwards,
  Then that vision passed away.
And I stood upon the borders
  Of a glistening, limpid lake,
I knelt down, with eager longing,
  My maddening thirst to slake.

When the vision quickly faded,
  And I saw a crystal spring,
Gush from the sand . . . towards it,
  I tried myself to fling.

When a flame of fire shot upwards,
  All around seemed turned to red,
And I thought instead of water
  I was drinking molten lead.
Which pounded through my body,
  Scorching, burning every vein,
And great drops with hell's fire heated,
  Slowly ate into my brain.
Then a thrill ran through my body
  For I dimly felt a hand
Pressed gently neath my shoulders,
  Raising me from off the sand.
And a cooling precious liquid
  Soothed my aching throat and breast,
Then I must have promptly fainted,
  For I knew not of the rest.

'Till I woke in blissful comfort
  Lying stretched upon a bed,
With a doctor bending o'er me
  Pressing ice-cloths to my head.

Then I learnt how I was rescued,
  How once more I came to live,
How another of God's creatures,
  His own life for me did give.
They had found me on the sand trail,
  Lying there close to my side,
Was the corpse of El Mestizo
  Huddled, naked as he'd died.
And around my blistered body
  Was a dirty, filthy rag,
Also resting on my shoulder
  Was an empty water bag.

And on El Mestizo's forearm
  Was a gash where he had bled,
While around his mouth and nostrils
  There appeared bright stains of red.
Need the story be unfolded?
  Such a tale all hearts must wrench.
He had sucked his very life blood,
  His own raving thirst to quench.
While he gave me all the water,
  Also stripped his body bare.
To protect me with his *poncho*
  From the blazing sun's fierce glare.

How he came to be beside me,
  In this life I'll never know,
Still he'll tell me all about it
  When I meet him down below.

I tried hard to solve the myst'ry,
  But all efforts proved in vain,
Incomplete will be this story
  'Till I see him once again.
On a hillock by that sand trail,
  Stands a cross—a rude affair,
But 'tis ever wreathed in glory
  For a hero's sleeping there.
No need for marble monument,
  Raised on high to mark the spot,
Hero-like such pomp he'd shrink from,
  He would wish his deed forgot.
Still my thoughts are ever centred
  In that far-off lonely grave,
Buried there lies El Mestizo,
  He who died my life to save.

THE GRINGO CEMETERY

As you take the road to Lima
  From Callao . . . on your right,
You will see a cemetery,
  Bounded by a *muro* [1] white.
On the slope of Bellavista,
  Looking out towards the West,
That's the spot . . . their labours ended,
  Where the *gringos* lie at rest.

You approach its sacred precincts
  By an avenue of trees,
Whose leaves so gently swaying
  In the passing upland breeze.
Seem in low and mournful murmurs
  To offer up a prayer
For the souls of the departed,
  Who asleep are lying there.

It was close towards the *tarde* [1a]
  That I sought that sacred place,
When the sun in its *puesta* [2]
  Turned to gold the ocean's face.

1—Wall. 1a—Afternoon late. 2—Setting.

While the housetops of Callao
  Glistened in the dazzling light,
And the churchyard's walls reflected
  Back to heaven the *rayos* [3] bright.

Ah! that spot . . . a perfect garden,
  With each grave a bed of flowers,
Where the *palma* tall and stately
  O'er each silent *tumba* [4] towers.
As I wandered down its pathways
  On each side inscriptions told
Of those sons of many nations
  Gathered to their Father's fold.

And the rays, so soft and tender,
  Like to fairy visions crept
Round those monuments erected
  Marking where those *gringos* slept.
Rugged blocks of cold grey granite,
  Hewed in Scotland stern and wild,
Polished slabs of blood red marble
  From Italia soft and mild.

Sons of Scotland, sons of England,
  With their Cousins o'er the sea,
Germans, Frenchmen, Jews, Italians,
  Joined by Death in unity.

3—Rays. 4—Tomb.

In their earthly lives divided,
  Born of diff'rent creed and race,
Yet by solemn death united
  In that small allotted space.

Long I lingered 'till the *luna*
  Turned each tomb a sceptre white,
And the glitt'ring sky was studded
  By those beacons of the night.
Then I slow took my departure
  While mine eyes with tears were dim,
From my lips the breeze of even
  Bore away a parting hymn.

Many sons of many nations,
  Men of station low and high,
Sleeping there . . . all on an equal,
  In a foreign soil they lie.
Diff'rent men of speech and custom
  When this suff'ring earth they trod,
They will all be classed as brothers
  When they rise to meet their God.

THE BEACHCOMBER

In Callao Port I met him
  Lying backwards on a seat,
In that tiny seaside plaza
  Where all West Coast 'wrecks' do meet.
'Neath the cooling shade afforded
  By the spreading palma trees,
With his feet stretched on the pathway
  Lolling there in blissful ease.

Long he watched the smooth *bahia*[1]
  Sparkle in the glare of day,
Where proud ships of ev'ry nation
  Peaceful at their anchors lay.
Then his eyes turned somewhat dreamy
  As he gazed far out to sea,
A Philosopher on Idling
  Wrapt in deepest reverie.

A battered felt *sombrero*
  From which colour long had fled,
With its rim a tattered ribbon,
  Crowned his matted unwashed head.

1—Harbor.

While his face, with liquor bloated,
  From soap's application free,
Bore red fest'ring scars upon it,
  Honours of a drunken spree.

And a beer-stained old *bandana*[2]
  Once a striking, blazing check,
Faded now from all its glory,
  Lent protection to his neck.
While his ragged coat and trousers,
  Gave free passage to the breeze,
With an entrance at his elbows
  And an exit at his knees.

Worn out boots let in the sunlight
  To his feet, which caked with earth,
Like his face, for years unbroken
  Had survived a water-dearth.
There he sat . . . a "down-and-outer"
  Hopeless, lost, devoid of shame,
Any trace of honour vanished,
  Without country, creed or name.

As I took a seat near by him,
  Lazily he turned his head,
Then perceiving me a *gringo*
  O'er his face a new light spread.

2—Scarf.

That "new light" came from the glowing
  Of a fervent hope, I think,
That before I'd left the plaza
  He'd have "touched" me for a drink.

Quick abandoning his musings,
  O'er his wrist for luck he spat,
And arising from the *banco* [3]
  Shuffling came to where I sat.
But I fled as he approached me,
  Yet his curses reached mine ear,
As he saw the chance he'd staked on
  Of a free drink disappear.

Yes! I left that old beachcomber
  In that *plaza* by the sea,
Where no doubt he still continues
  In his constant reverie.
'Till he tires of doing nothing,
  And departs from off this earth,
To where, if I mistake not,
  He will prove of better worth.

Where they'll keep him constant at it
  And won't give him time to tire,
In the foremost rank hard sweating
  He will stack the blazing fire.

3—Seat.

While the devil will, I reckon,
  Prod his hide if he should shirk,
And at last in burning Hades
  He will learn what 'tis to work.

ADIOS SOUTHERN CITY

O Queen of the South I bid thee adieu,
I leave for afar my health to renew,
For since the first day thou rose to my view
  I've quaked with the vile *paludismo.*[1]
And as I'd object in thy warm sands to lie
Should I from this fever be fated to die
Alas! I'm compelled to bid thee Good-bye,
  My boat leaves to-day for *El Istmo.*[2]

O Pearl of the South, thou city of *plazas,*[3]
Of long narrow *calles*[4] and 'dobe built *casas*[5]
Where thriving within live the *pulgas en masas*[6]
  No more in thy presence I'll dwell.
For long have I suffered 'neath thy heated dome,
I came as a stripling fresh starting to roam
I leave thee a wreck for my country and home,
  I bid thee a cheerful farewell.

O Gem of the South where gringos are *dueños,*[7]
Through making their fortunes by deeds *carrasqueños,*[8]
While sons of the countries are deep in their *sueños,*[9]
  As work is the last thing that's sought for.

1—Tropical fever. 2—The Isthmus. 3—Squares (city). 4—Streets. 5—Houses. 6—Fleas in masses. 7—Owners or bosses. 8—Sharp. 9—Dreams.

Oh quit for a while thy political prate,
Awake from thy slumbers and look to thy fate,
Arise from thy sloth ere the day be too late,
  And keep what your forefathers fought for.

Good-bye to *carreras,*[10] bullfights and *siestas,*[11]
Adieu to gay *noches*[12] of dance and *fiestas,*[13]
Which bring to the body results *siniestras,*[14]
  Connections with such things I sever.
Farewell ye fair women and chivalrous men,
Salud, buena suerte, que vayan bien![15]
The last drop of *tinta*[16] quick dries on my pen,
  Adios Southern City for ever.

10—Steeplechases. 11—Noonday sleep. 12—Nights. 13—Festivities. 14—Sinister. 15—Health—good luck, may things go well with you. 16—Ink.

THE GREENHORN

You will know him if you meet him,
  He is always spic and span,
Riding pants and polished leggings,
  With his boots a lurid tan.
Burnished spurs and wide *sombrero,*
  With a shooter at his hip,
Striving hard to bring to daylight
  Hidden hairs upon his lip.

Always boasting of his country,
  Knowing more than all the rest,
Drinking deep to keep his end up,
  While the liquor burns his chest.
Talking loud of all his exploits
  And the men he's filled with lead,
'Till I've often sat and wondered,
  Where this 'hero' hides his dead.

He's for ever loud professing
  All that's native-made to hate,
Full despising all around him,
  Mourning o'er his present fate.
As he talks of 'days at college',
  And the 'good old times' at home,
'Till it's seemed to me a pity
  That his mother let him roam.

Soon you'll know the spot he hails from,
  For of English pride he stinks,
Not a place on earth like England,
  So this greeny-greenhorn thinks.
He should think . . . the son of Adam,
  Ere he opes his mouth to speak,
How he slaved in 'Good Old England'
  Earning twenty bob a week.

He forgets about the office,
  Where he sat from morn 'till night,
Striving for a weekly pittance,
  Body cramped and aching sight.
Where he saw his fellow workers,
  Weak of chest with rounded back,
With starvation's ghost before them
  Should they chance to get the sack.

He forgets about the climate
  With its snow, its sleet and rain,
Where the sun does shine but seldom,
  And the stars come out in vain.
Where the sky is always clouded,
  And foul smoke does fill the air,
Where petty pride and poverty
  Surrounds one everywhere.

Ere another year quick passes,
  O'er the greeny-greenhorn's head,
He will cease to curse the country
  Where he earns his daily bread.
He will quit his polished leggings
  For a hide of tougher wear,
And he'll find that burnished *teasers*
  Quickly rust in open air.

Should he need to draw his shooter
  (Though the chances are remote),
He will find it's just as handy
  Hidden underneath his coat.
Riding pants and wide *sombrero*
  Will be much the worse for wear,
And his efforts proving fruitless
  He will shave his *'cara'*[1] bare.

He will change his yellow *'botas'*[2]
  For a pair of duller tan,
And he'll cease to oft remind you
  He was born an Englishman.
And at last he'll learn, this greenhorn,
  There are other spots on earth,
Which are equal, if not better,
  To the land that gave him birth.

1—Face. 2—Boots.

IN THE SHADE OF THE COCOANUT PALM

'Neath a glittering sky
At mine ease I did lie,
  In the shade of a cocoanut palm
Looking out to the West
O'er Pacific's broad breast
  Lying still in a tropical calm.

And the seagulls in flight,
Showing bosoms snow white
  Sent cries through the azure above,
While the whispering breeze
As it strayed through the trees
  Low murmured romances of love.

The waves ever moaning
Like sinners atoning
  Crept in o'er the red coral strand,
Now ended their roaming
They laid themselves foaming
  To rest on the glistening sand.

Faint on the *viento* [1]
In *dulce accento* [2]
  Came strains of a song from afar,

1—Wind. 2—Sweet accent.

Through woodland low calling
Now rising, now falling
  To the twang of a Spanish guitar.

Sweet notes soft and mellow
Like tones of a cello
  From the throat of that singer did pour,
And I thrilled as it told
In Castilla of old
  Of a stirring romance *de amor*.[3]

The trees ceased their swaying
The breezes their straying
  The seagulls flew silent along.
The surf's roar abated
All nature now waited
  To list to that rapturous song.

Alas! it soon ended
The final note blended
  With Nature . . . once more on its way,
And I heard not again
That romantic refrain
  Though I lingered, till closing of day.

3—Of love.

As the ev'ning grew late
Once again I did wait,
  'Neath the spread of that cocoanut palm,
The sparkling *laguna*
Deep bathed by the *luna*
  Lay wrapt in a southern calm.

And the phosphorous gleam
On the coral did seem,
  Bright lanterns of fairies at play,
While the splash of the sea
O'er the strand, was to me
  The sound of their laughter so gay.

As I gazed on the night
A fair vision in white
  Quick appeared from the neighbouring wood.
Like a fairy it sped
'Long the pathway which led
  To the palm 'neath whose shadow I stood.

As I watched it draw near
In the moonlight so clear
  Loud the air with a *canción*[4] rung,
Then I knew that the lay
Which I'd heard in the day
  By this Maid of the Night had been sung.

4—Song.

Deep the *luna's* meek light,
Bathed this Maid of the Night
  Revealing her beauty so rare.
Such perfection did seem
But vain hopes of a dream
  Nought in life I had seen to compare.

When my form she espied
On her lips the song died
  In its place came a low cry of fear.
She stood still with amaze
And continued to gaze
  With the shy startled look of a deer.

I stepped forth from the palm
Now determined to calm
  Those fears which my presence had sown.
Ere I ventured a word
Like a timorous bird
  Surprised in its song, she had flown.

When the twilight had gone
And the moon brightly shone
  O'er woodland, laguna and strand,
'Neath the *palma's* dark shade
Where I first met that maid
  Each night, eager watching, I'd stand.

And her voice I would hear
Rising mellow and clear
  In songs, e'er romantic, of love.
As a lark on the wing
Far those sweet notes would ring
  Light borne by the breezes above.

From my place 'neath the tree
Oft her form I would see
  Flitt'ring round in the palm grove afar,
As she tripped on her way
Light her fingers would stray
  O'er the strings of her sweet-toned guitar.

Need the story be told
How one night she grew bold
  And stayed as she saw me draw near,
How she sang once again
That romantic refrain
  Now vanished all traces of fear.

Ah de mi! I recall
When the *noche*[5] would fall
  'Neath the spread of that sheltering tree.
I would lie at her feet
While in tones low and sweet
  She would sing that *romanza*[6] to me.

5—Night. 6—Romance.

Bright would flash her dark eyes
And her white bosom rise
  While she thrilled with the theme of her lay,
The gitara's soft strain
Would vibrate once again
  As the song on her lips died away.

Then . . . alas . . . the bright flame
Of *amor* quickly came
  And banished all else from my mind.
Discretion had fled
With impulse I was led
  By the blaze of my passion made blind.

One fair eve, side by side
When the day's glare had died
  We sat in the sunset's soft glow.
In my dreams . . . *ah de mi!*
Fleeting visions I see
  Recalling that eve long ago.

The last rays from the West
Lingered long on her breast
  Which gleamed, 'neath its cov'ring, snow white,
Then ascending it spread
Round her beautiful head
  A dazzling bright halo of light.

And revealing awhile
With a radiant smile
  Those pearls 'twixt her lips rosy red.
Quick she parried love's trend
Which defeating its end
  The flame of my passion but fed.

Wild within my heart leapt
Mad desire o'er me swept
  Its fierceness consuming my brain,
'Neath its dominant sway
I could brook no delay
  Now eager love's treasure to gain.

Ere she'd time to protest
I had clasped to my breast
  That beautiful Maid of the Night.
Like a wind-shaken leaf
She slight trembled beneath
  My gaze, with deep passion alight.

While her fluttering breast
Which seemed ne'er to seek rest
  Rose up from its covering free,
And her heart in its shrine
Full re-echoed by mine
  Throbbed aloud in divine ecstasy.

From my lips wild did pour
Burning words of *amor*
  What vows in that moment were spoken!
When by love rudely swayed
What vows fervent are made!
  Oft destined . . . alas . . . to be broken.

Useless struggles quick spent
With a sigh of content
  Fully conquered she yielded to me,
Heated lips sought one kiss
Ah! those moments of bliss!
  In the shade of that cocoanut tree.

Still she lay in mine arms
While I drank of her charms
  Declaring my passion for ever.
But I knew not . . . alas!
That our sweet dream would pass
  And that God had decreed we should sever

To mine ears came a sound
Up I sprang from the ground
  And there 'neath the *palma's* dark shade,
Was a form drawing near
While a loud cry of fear
  Escaped from the lips of that maid.

Ere one pace I had stepped
That strange figure had leapt
  The blade of a dagger flashed bright,
Quick it hissed through the air
One wild shriek of despair
  And it sank in her bosom snow-white.

Like a demon he flew
'Twas but vain to pursue
  He was lost in the depths of the grove.
Stricken mad with my grief
Which far past all belief
  To staunch her blood flowing I strove.

And she issued to speak
But her voice it grew weak
  The blood from her bosom flowed free.
One last struggle for breath
Then the Angel of Death
  Bore away my dear loved one from me.

Let me draw a thick veil
O'er that scene in my tale
  Where my rival at last met his doom.
'Fore my tear-bedimmed eyes
Many visions arise
  But to fade in the gathering gloom.

And I sit all alone
When these visions have flown
  For my heart there is no healing balm.
All my happiness fled
To the realms of the dead
  'Neath the shade of that cocoanut palm.

ON THE ROAD TO AREQUIPA

On the road to Arequipa
  Up from bleak Mollendo's shore
Where the surf sweeps o'er the *rocás* [1]
  With a loud continuous roar,
Where the native huts like limpets
  To the cliffs uprising cling
As the breezes from the westward
  Through their shaking *muros* [2] sing.
On the road to Arequipa
  Up along that mountain trail,
Are those wondrous scenes of Nature
  Artists strive to paint, yet fail.

As the first rays of the morning
  Kiss the snow on Misti's [3] crest,
'Tis to hail the quick departure
  Of the silent earth's dark guest.
And that snowy draped volcano
  As it soars itself on high,
Seems a giant ghostly phantom
  In the dimly lighted sky,

1—Rocks. 2—Walls. 3—Volcanoes rising over Arequipa.

Watching o'er the darkened valleys
  Struggling with the grip of night
To be free once more to revel
  In the early morning light.

Far away the distant Andes
  Look like domes of beaten gold,
One recalls those ancient stories
  Of their hidden wealth untold.
And the painted clouds above them
  Seem like halos o'er their heads,
Turning to a crimson awning
  As the light of morning spreads.
'Till the night weds with the dawning
  And another day has birth,
Piercing through the ling'ring shadows
  'Till it meets the waiting earth.

Earth, sea and tall *montaña* [4]
  Revel in the warming rays,
As the sun its dazzling *manta* [5]
  On the scene below it lays.
Range o'er range of tow'ring mountains
  Rise majestic to the blue
Like a stairway up to heaven
  'Till they're lost to human view.

4—Mountain. 5—Cloak.

At one's feet the narrow canyons
  Drop to where the *lagos*[6] dwell,
Ever wrapt in utter darkness
  In the very depths of hell.

From those depths come many waters
  Gayly laughing to be free
Glist'ning in the morning sunlight
  As they race towards the sea.
On the way the thirsty valleys
  From those waters drink full deep
In return, the river's courses
  With a verdant green, they steep.
Scattered herds of sated cattle
  O'er the velvet pastures rove,
While the cowboy seeks the shelter
  Of a small *naranja*[7] grove.

Faint one hears a *Cholo*[8] chanting
  In a weird romantic strain,
Far along the narrow pathway
  Comes a ladened llama train,
Stately beasts, they choose their footsteps
  With a cool accustomed ease,
From their heads so proud erected
  Ribbons flutter in the breeze.

6—Lakes. 7—Orange. 8—Indian (Peru).

Sure of step, no hesitation,
  To the bare walls hugging tight
Winding slowly, ever upwards
  'Till they pass from human sight.

Down below old Arequipa
  Bright the smiling morning greets,
Many packs of market *burros* [9]
  Wend their ways along its streets.
The cathedral's old *campana* [10]
  Loudly rings the noonday mass,
Soft return the distant echoes
  From beyond the mountain pass.
Hour by hour the day grows older,
  'Till at last the listless trees
Rouse themselves at the approaching
  Of the upland ev'ning breeze.

On the road to Arequipa
  When the sun doth bid us rest
Shooting burnished rays to Misti
  From Samoa in the West.
Low it sinks 'neath the horizon
  A resplendent fiery ball
And permits the cold dark *noche* [11]
  On the heated earth to fall.

9—Donkeys. 10—Bell. 11—Night.

As the people of the westward
  Fast asleep so peaceful lie,
Once again the sun awakens
  Dwellers 'neath the eastern sky.

Ah! that scene of wondrous beauty
  When the rays paint Misti's head
From its snows at even flowing
  Many streams of bloody red.
When again the distant Andes
  Deck with gold each rugged peak,
While a cloak of many colours
  Wraps each mountain rising bleak,
From the hood which drapes the shoulders
  Burning with a crimson glow,
To the fringe of inky blackness
  As it joins the depths below.

Out to West the wide Pacific
  Stretching far to meet the sky,
Clear reflects the countless colours
  Of the tinted clouds on high.
And the islets on its bosom
  Seem like tiny ships at rest,
Each so still . . . a sleeping baby
  Dreaming on its mother's breast.

With a final dazzling *rayo* [12]
  Sinks the sun beneath the sea
And the night from out the eastward
  O'er the earth creeps silently.

On the road to Arequipa
  When all trace of day has flown
Light the stars meek luna's pathway
  As she quickly mounts her throne.
Come the whisp'ring western breezes
  From the starlit Far Beyond,
Where the cruel God of Tempests
  Waves on high his mystic wand.
Scarred and weather-beaten *rocas*
  Deeply stained a russet brown,
Like a line of ancient warriors
  Out to seaward darkly frown.

Once again old hoary Misti,
  Changeful as a flippant maid,
Quick returns the moon's caresses
  Ere its eve'ning blushes fade.
Peak o'er peak the tow'ring Andes
  Rise towards the milky way,
Glist'ning bright the virgin snowfields,
  As the moonbeams o'er them play.

12—Ray.

While the azure dome above them
  Deep is crusted like a crown,
With those glitt'ring pure *estrellas,*[13]
  From their settings twinkling down.

Far below the valleys sparkle,
  Deeply steeped with *noche's* dew,
One would think a thousand diamonds
  On each verdant *hoja*[14] grew.
Running swift the many waters
  Look like wakes of fleecy white,
Stretching back towards the westward
  'Till they fade into the night.
On the plain old Arequipa,
  With its rows of *casas*[15] neat,
Seems a camp of roving Bedouins
  Snugly pitched at Misti's feet.

Ceased . . . the mountain *Cholo's* chanting
  Hushed . . . the valley herdman's call,
Peacefully now wrapt in slumbers
  'Neath the *luna's* silent pall.
Stilled . . . the church's old *campana*
  Gone . . . the bustle of the day,
Perfect peace does reign from Misti,
  To the far Mollendo Bay.

13—Stars. 14—Leaf. 15—Houses.

With the moon and stars as watchers
  O'er each Arequipan home,
Sleep they 'till the break of dawning
  'Neath the spreading southern dome.

LITANY OF THE TROPICAL TRAMPS

(By a dyspeptic grumbler)

Oh Lord, although we've wandered from Thy
Christian soldiers' camps,
And deserve the reputation of incorrigible scamps,
Although but hardened sinners whom they call the
Tropic Tramps,
Yet Hear Our Prayer.

From officialdom of Customs, that deeply braided
band,
Whose weird gesticulations you fail to understand,
Who drive you sheer to madness the day when first
you land,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

From that pompous *commandante,*[1] ruler of the
braided race,
Swollen up with self-importance, covered deep with
golden lace,
With the signs of many vices written on his swarthy
face,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

1—Commander of port.

From the snares of black *porteros*[2] who meet you on the shore,
And greet each simple *gringo* with one ear splitting roar,
(They know they're sure to 'fleece' him of all he's got and more,)
Good Lord Deliver Us.

From the wiles of all *cocheros*,[3] who charge you treble fare,
Who seem to think each *gringo* a bloated millionaire,
And should you dare dispute it, with curses rend the air,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

From the care of hotel waiters, the keenest of their kind,
Who ask you for *propinas*[4] before you've even dined,
And strut about like monkeys with shirt-tails out behind,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

2—Porters. 3—Coachdrivers. 4—Tips.

From the Chinese *lavandero*[5] who to your wash attends,
Who badly spoken Spanish with pidgin English blends,
Who 'sticks' you twice the tariff, and then your clothing rends,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

From the crowds of filthy beggars who for *limosnas*[6] plead,
At whose persistent wailing the hardest heart would bleed,
Who transmit crawling vermin of ev'ry size and breed,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

From the swarms of small mosquitoes which surround one's fevered head,
From the fleas and bugs in armies which patrol one's heated bed,
Causing deep and lurid curses which were better left unsaid,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

5—Laundryman. 6—Alms.

From the clanging of *campanas*[7] e'er the infant day is born,
From the wailing loud of *burros*[8] sounding like a rasping horn,
From the weird and deaf'ning noises which comprise a tropic morn,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

From the many cocktails taken to revive one's appetite,
From the 'punches' of the morning and the 'high-balls' strong of night,
From the dreadful lust of gambling 'till the early morning light,
Good Lord Deliver Us.

From the meals with garlic reeking of the hotel's greasy chef,
From the Passion of The Tropics and the fever's poisonous breath,
From diseases (best not mentioned) which result in early death.
Good Lord Deliver Us.

7—Bells. 8—Donkeys.

SONG

"The Typical Tropical Tramp"

I'll sing you the song of a typical type,
  You'll meet on the Tropical Belt,
His cherished belongings a well-seasoned pipe,
  A Colt and *sombrero* [1] of felt.
The rest it don't matter, as long as he's got
  A garment to cover his skin,
Somewhere to slumber, with something to eat,
  And the price of a *trago* [2] of gin.

Chorus.

Tramp . . . Tramp . . . Tramp . . .
The Typical Tropical Tramp,
  In cafe or *casa*,[3] in *parque* [4] or *plaza*,[5]
You'll meet with this wandering scamp,
  Content with his lot, for he don't care a jot.
No hardships his feelings can damp.
  So I'm happy by jingo, to call him a *gringo*,
This Typical Tropical Tramp.

You'll see him perhaps in the glare of daylight,
  On a narrow Peruvian street,
On a Chilian trail in the dead of the night,
  By his camp fire this *gringo* you'll meet.

1—Wide hat. 2—Generally used as meaning a sip. 3—House. 4—Park. 5—Square.

In wild Ecuador or on Panama's shore,
  Where'er or what'er is his lot,
You'll find him a sport, and a jolly good sort,
  In spite of the name that he's got.

Chorus.

He's a devil to fight and a beggar to booze,
  A leader in going the pace,
But a comrade true blue, when your spirits fast
    ooze,
  As death stares you grim in the face.
Eternally damned, for in sin he is steeped,
  From the crown of his head to his feet,
Yet I don't care a rap, he's a jolly good chap,
  Yes . . . one of the best you could meet.

Chorus.

* THE GRINGO'S GROWL

It's a land of small Republics,
  Where the devil runs the show,
As a training ground he keeps it
  For those damned to go below.
And his angels are the natives
  While the *gringos* are his prey,
Who like sheep led to the slaughter
  Come to purge their souls away.
Yes! the fools leave their own countries
  For this God-forsaken Coast,
Where every man amongst us
  Will below for ever roast.

They come out to make a fortune,
  But instead get deep in debt
They come out with hearts a-glowing
  And remain to fume and fret.
See that youngster 'out on contract,'
  With his glowing, clear-skinned face!
He is learning—swift and surely
  With the rest to "go the pace."

* (Opinions of the chronic groucher whom the author has often encountered).

Here's another—"contract finished"
  Finds himself without a cent,
With his fruits of five years' sweating,
  All in drink and gambling spent.

There again! that grim "old timer"!
  There that new "remittance man"!
Chumming with that lying "Land Shark"
  Begging, thieving where he can.
Last of all, that vile "beachcomber"
  With his sordid tale of woe,
From whose lips, when drink's refused him,
  Streams of lurid oaths fast flow.
There they are—past all redemption,
  Old Nick's got them in his spell,
And their fevered, drink-soaked bodies
  Torches bright will make in hell.

Yes! we're all mixed up together
  Into one perspiring crowd,
Up from which a moan of anguish
  Is ascending long and loud.
Yea! our grumbles, groans and curses,
  And our cries of mad despair,
Many breaths with whisky laden,
  Fill the rank obnoxious air.

Should a saint come down to save us
  'Twould be as forlorn a hope
As to teach a dirty nigger
  What's the proper use of soap.

I'm afraid he'd soon get tainted
  In this land of woes and wails,
In a month—I'll bet a dollar——
  He'd be drinking gin cocktails.
He'd forget about his mission,
  And the souls he'd come to save,
And at last, to West Coast vices,
  Like us all he'd be a slave.
And suppose he had '*dinero*' [1]
  (It's a thing he'd have to use.)
Then just think how '*cargadores*' [2]
  Of his goodness would abuse.

Fancy giving '*los fleteros*' [3]
  What they'd ask!—the thought's absurd,
For among those Imps of Satan,
  Honesty's an unknown word.
To those robbers called '*cocheros*' [4]
  He'd be like rain in a dearth,
For together with '*fleteros*'
  They're the biggest thieves on earth.

1—Money. 2—Carriers. 3—Cargo boatmen. 4—Coach-drivers.

And the multitude of beggars
  Who infest this wicked land,
Would grow fat like worms in autumn,
  On the bounties from his hand.

'Till at last—his '*plata*' [5] finished——
  Being fleeced of all he had,
They would term him as '*un loco*' [6]
  They would think him raving mad.
No! no saint could ever save us
  Though he preached and worked full well,
He'd be out of place amongst us,
  Like a snowball would in hell.
Then I say it's an injustice!
  (When we leave this earth at last,
And our lives, full of temptations,
  In these far lands have been cast)

That, up in the Golden Mansions,
  Our poor souls they will despise,
Why!—by rights they should present us
  With a special Paradise.
And repay us for our suff'rings
  In this fever-stricken spot,
Where the good we ever knew of
  Has—alas—been long forgot.

5—Silver money. 6—A madman.

From the Northern placid ocean,
  To the Southern stormy seas,
In this land of wailing donkeys,
  Howling dogs and bounding fleas.

LURE OF THE TROPICS

When you're sitting alone with the curtains drawn tight,
To keep out the chill of a blustering night,
When you listen, 'tween lulls, to the hard driven rain,
As it patters aloud on your room's window pane,
How your thoughts they return to those days long ago,
Again a voice calls, which 'tis hard to withstand,
Strong enters the lure of that sun-bedecked land,
Where the tall waving palm and the mango trees grow.

What pictures you see of those times that are gone,
Of dawns, when the rays kissed the lingering dew,
Of nights, when the moon o'er *laguna*[1] bright, shone,
And stars glowed like gems in a casket of blue,
Fair scenes with their beauty before you unfold,
Arise to your nostrils the smells of a camp,
As dear to the heart of a Tropical Tramp,
As powder and smoke to a warrior old.

1—Lagoon.

Once more you are hearing the donkey's loud bray,
Which heralds the birth of a tropical day,
Again softly echoes the *cholo's* [2] weird song
As guiding his pack train he shuffles along.
  Once more you are feeling the streamlets of sweat
Quick drenching your skin as the sun rises high,
Full casting its blaze from a simmering sky
  On beauties of Nature you'll never forget.

You're plodding again o'er a Chilian trail
  With naught but a harsh croaking vulture in sight,
Or list'ning intent to a wanderer's tale
  By glowing camp fires in the stillness of night.
A roar in the forest, a scream on the plain,
  A puma's faint cry like a whimpering child,
Those threat'ning and blood-curdling calls of the wild,
  Ah . . . how your ears tingle to hear them again.

Gruff voices of comrades resound in your room,
Familiar old faces look out from the gloom,
And beckon you back to those countries once more,
Of jungle, of mountain and coral-bound shore.
  Their fair panoramas before you unroll,

2—Indian (Peru).

Escapes from your bosom a deeply drawn sigh,
The truth must be told, though you feign would
deny,
The Lure of the Tropics has entered your soul.

THE GRINGO'S DREAM

Our camp fire was lit—for the day's ride was o'er,
And we silently lay near the flickering light,
The gang's *'raconteur'* had exhausted his store,
And the last song was hushed in the stillness of night.

While dreaming, my thoughts bore me back through the years
To the dear one I left in that land far away,
Two bright eyes of brown gladly smiled through their tears,
As I vowed from my darling's side never to stray.

Together we walked through that old village lane,
Where birds sang aloud in the branches above,
She blushingly heard as I whispered again
That story of ages—the story of love.

And quickly the shadows of eventide fell,
Our lips sought a kiss in the light of the gloam,
Rang out o'er the hillside the curfew's soft knell,
The signal for us to return to our home.

By the wide open hearth in that old-fashioned room,
Retaining the dearest of mem'ries for me,
She dreamily played, in the gathering gloom,
Those rapturous chords of the sweet Rosary.

I arose as she ended that soothing refrain,
And stretched out mine arms to encircle her round,
Then awoke—to the cry of a beast on the plain,
And the snores of my comrade in slumbers profound.

THE WOOINGS OF A GRINGO

'Twas coming out West as a youngster
  My experience of women begun,
The teacher . . . a year or so widow,
  Heartbroken, attractive and young.
And I but a stripling from college,
  To the wiles of her sex I was new,
Eyes pleading and wet, I was caught in the net,
  And she taught me the first that I knew.

The next was a hot-blooded creole
  Aglow with the fire of the South,
Dark hair like the wing of a raven,
  Bright eyes and a rosy lipped mouth.
She gave me first lessons in Spanish,
  Her voice like the coo of a dove,
Though a duffer to learn I was quick to discern,
  So she taught me instead about love.

I encountered the next in Havana,
  (That land of the five-pointed star)
A-sitting alone in the *plaza,*[1]
  Slow puffing a *Concha* cigar,

1—City square.

Curiosity's glance in the passing,
  Returned by a passionate look,
?Que haces mulata? ?Tienes tu plata?
  And I added a page to my book.

Then later I shipped to the Isthmus,
  That Zone of mad bustle and rush,
And there met an innocent *gringa,*
  Yea . . . one of the few who could blush.
Yet I, from experience with others,
  Was fool to consider her such,
She managed to thwart me, and clearly she taught me,
  That women can differ in much.

And then came a sloe-eye *Limeña,*[2]
  Who had me completely bewitched,
A packet of endless surprises,
  A tigress and lamb intermixed.
How fiercely she loved . . . ah that loving!
  But jealousy came in between,
And it finished in strife, when she marked me for life,
  With a thrust from her dagger blade keen.

2—Girl of Lima.

The next was a girl of the jungle,
  Who never by man had been sought,
Her knowledge . . . what instinct had taught her,
  And mine . . . what I dearly had bought.
But when it arrived at love-making
  She beat me by miles at the game,
So I'm prone to believe, that her ancestress Eve,
  Was the one and the only to blame.

Then followed a maiden of Mayfair,
  Perfection in culture and grace,
Though her manner was highly effusive,
  Hypocrisy lurked in her face.
Her beauty and innocence studied,
  Full many admirers beguiled,
But deep down below, she never, I know,
  Could compare with that girl of the wild.

And so ends the tale of my wooings,
  (At least all of them I recall),
Except for the one that proved final,
  The truest and purest of all.
I had thought that most women were nothing
  But playthings in moments of mirth,
Then she entered my life, soon I made her my wife,
  And she's taught me what women are worth.

HOMESICK

When you wake up at dawn with a weight on your chest
And you gaze to the East though your trail it lies West,
When your appetite's gone and you curse without zest,—
You're homesick, poor *gringo,* you're homesick.

As you slow wind your way o'er that mountainous track,
In the trees, by the roadside, deep notches you hack,
You swear to erase them the day you turn back,—
You're homesick, *gringito,* you're homesick.

When you've got a bad grouch and the cause you can't tell,
When you hate e'en the name of the land where you dwell,
And you wish all the country and natives in hell,—
You're homesick, old growler, you're homesick.

When the sweltering heat steeps your eyebrows
with sweat,
And the *poncho* [1] clings tight to your back wringing wet,
Then you think of a winter at home with regret,—
You're homesick, old fellow, you're homesick.

From the breaking of dawn 'till the closing of day
Not a man nor a beast 'cross your pathway does
stray,
Then you think of the populous Strand or Broadway,—
You're homesick, poor beggar, you're homesick.

When the sun ends the day as its labours have
ceased,
Then you watch that grey veil rising faint in the
East,
While your troubles you tell to your wondering
beast,—
You're homesick, *Caramba!* you're homesick.

1—Riding cloak.

By the glowing camp fire as you sit through the night,
What visions of homeland arise to your sight,
Ah! what pictures you see in that flickering light,—
You're homesick, old timer, you're homesick.

Then your mother's dear face looks out from the glare,
The smoke takes the form of your sweetheart so fair,
And voices of friends whisper low on the air,—
You're homesick, poor devil, you're homesick.

When your eyes they grow dim and your heart aches within,
And a lump you can't swallow sticks under your chin,
How you curse at your fate till your soul's steeped in sin,—
You're homesick, poor *gringo,* you're homesick.

At last fast asleep in the moonlight's cold beams,
Now deadened your ears to the puma's wild screams,
You're happy once more . . . you've returned, in your dreams,
To the land of your birth, homesick *gringo.*

SON OF A GUN

As your story it is done,
And the gang's applause you've won,
  A-telling how you flayed a nigger's hide,
Let ME tell a story, too,
Of a nigger whom I knew,
  With skin as black as pitch . . . yet white inside.

He was cookie to our gang,
On the trek in Yucatan,
  If he heard a rifle crack he'd cut and run,
And as *HE had laid the claim*
To a most ungodly name,
  We compromised and called him . . . Son-of-a-Gun.

It was "Hurry up you black-faced Son-of-a-Gun,"
When the toilings of a swelt'ring day were done,
"Look alive and serve that mess up,
Or by God I'll cut your flesh up,
  You dirty good-for-nothing Son-of-a-Gun."

What that nigger *couldn't* cook,
Would have filled a blooming book,
  He had served "before the mast" in former life,

And his sticky foc'sle stew.
Clogged the guts of all our crew,
  'Till the plottings for his sudden death were rife.

He would never give back-chin,
With a wide jaw-breaking grin,
  He'd stand the kicks and curses of each one,
If you heard the sounds of strife
You could bet your blessed life,
  'Twas the crew a-educating Son-of-a-Gun.

It was "Where's that would-be-poisoner Son-of-a-Gun?"
When the gang, with liquor filled, were out for fun,
  "Up and dance you murdering nigger,
  Pronto![1] or I'll draw this trigger,
And you'll cook for souls in hell, you Son-of-a-Gun."

I never shall forget,
God! it makes me shiver yet,
  Although it's past and done with long ago,
That night the spirit flew
From the strongest of our crew,
  And we found that Yellow Jack had laid him low.

1—Quick! hurry!

It was was "Get a spade from somewhere, Son-of-a-
Gun,
And dig a hole for this poor mother's son,
Lift him up or else I'll lick you,
Now he's dead he cannot kick you,
You deep-dyed *sinverguenza,*[2] Son-of-a-Gun."

Then our troubles they began,
Through the camp that *peste*[3] ran,
And we buried three before the week was done,
When in tortures vile they died,
Standing by their *catre*[4] side,
To close their staring eyes, was Son-of-a-Gun.

Though they often kicked and cursed him,
Like a woman now he nursed 'em,
Beside them all his waking hours he spent,
And when death was hov'ring nigh,
He'd be there to say Good-bye,
And hear their last requests before they went.

It was "Lift the pillow higher, Son-of-a-Gun,
And let me see once more the rising sun,
For before it ends its round,
I'll be rotting underground,
And you'll have one less to curse you, Son-of-a-
Gun."

2—Without shame. 3—Plague. 4—Camp bed.

When WE stood struck dumb with fright,
Ev'ry skin a sickly white,
  With his endless grin he went about his work,
And he had no fear of death,
Through that fever's poisonous breath,
  He never for a moment thought to shirk.

In the quickly wid'ning track,
Of that loathsome Yellow Jack,
  The members of our gang fell one by one,
'Till the last man on his feet,
(Who had failed to know defeat)
  Was that thick-lipped, black-skinned cookie.
      Son-of-a-Gun.

"Oiga! Oiga! Oiga! Oiga! Son-of-a-Gun,"
Was the dying cry of each and ev'ry one,
  When each throat turned crackling dry,
  You would hear that feeble cry,
"For God sake bring me *agua,*[5] Son-of-a-Gun."

He would bury them when dead,
He would smooth each fevered head,
  And the dying thanks—unspoken—oft he won.
Yes! the finest soothing balm,
Was the dirty greasy palm,
  Of that grimy *cocinero,*[6] Son-of-a-Gun.

5—Water. 6—Cook.

When at last a few could crawl,
He received his Maker's call,
  And as the morning broke his spirit fled,
With each bended head uncovered,
Rising sobs but vainly smothered,
  We laid him midst the circle of our dead.

Fourteen left we of our gang,
Neath the soil of Yucatan,
  And the rest . . . ah well! the ending can abide,
For my story's just to show,
That a hero's blood can flow,
  Through the heart which beats within a nigger's hide.

He was but a *sinverguena* Son-of-a-Gun,
The common butt of each and ev'ry one,
  Yet the bravest man I knew,
  Though with skin of blackest hue,
Was that grinning, squint-eyed cookie, Son-of-a-Gun.

TO MY CHUM

GEORGE EDWARD NICHOLSON

(known to his intimate friends as "NICK")

Just a note to say 'how goes it,'
Silent Nick,
You're a man, who as a comrade,
None could lick.
To the staunchest, truest friend,
Who stood by me to the end,
These few jottings now I send,
Good old Nick.

When I lay with fever raging,
Mighty sick,
You never thought to leave me,
Did you Nick?
Though your language it was gruff,
And your treatment somewhat rough,
Yet it proved to be enough,
Good old Nick.

What about that ride to Pampa!
Thirsty Nick!
When each throat was dry and gritty,
As a brick.
When I fell to madly raving,
For that drop of water craving,
And you gave it . . . never saving,
Bless you Nick.

And again, that night in Piura,
Fighting Nick,
When my senseless hide that nigger
Wished to prick,
You never dreamt to funk it,
Or turn around and bunk it,
But drew your blade and sunk it,
Bravo Nick!

When I won that maiden from you,
Gallant Nick,
You didn't, as my rival,
Start to kick.
Though your heart was well nigh breaking,
Yet you gave my hand a shaking,
As I stood your thirst a slaking,
Good old Nick.

Here's your health and God be with you,
Always Nick.
Ever to our lifelong friendship,
Will we stick.
Through the fair and foulest weather,
We will beat the trail together,
'Till at last we slip life's tether,
Comrade Nick.

THE PASSING OF A DAY

The sun her day's work ended,
  Sinks in the distant West
And Nature's tired children
  Gladly seek their rest.
Sweet Mother Earth full open bares
  Her bosom to receive
Those kindly dews, which, falling slow,
  Her quivering pulse relieve.
Across the verdant pampa,
  The sated cattle wend
The cowboy seeks his homestead,
  The day's toil at an end.
A grey veil rises quickly
  From out the eastern sky
Which heralds to the wayward
  That chilly night is nigh.
Slowly the earth wears darker,
  The red glow fades away,
Nature with its mysteries
  Is older by a day.

HAVANA

Cuba's sun had sought its slumbers
  O'er Tampico in the west,
And the moon so meek and holy
  Bathed the earth at God's behest.
Bright each star, aroused from day dreams,
  Twinkled in its sapphire bed,
While the sky in calm resplendour
  Gleamed serenely o'er my head.

And I stood near Morro Castle
  Gazing on Havana's shore,
To mine ears the strains of music
  Faint the breeze of even bore,
While I watched the streams of *gente* [1]
  Strolling past the Malecón,
Up that *palma* bordered Prado
  To the Parque de Colón.

On my right stretched fair Vedado,
  Glitt'ring neath its many lights,
Far away Jesús del Monte,
  Crusted deep the darkened heights.

1—People.

To my left the silent harbour,
  Rested from the rush of day,
On its bosom Ocean Vagrants
  At their anchors peaceful lay.

And across the moonlit waters,
  Came gay laughter's liquid sound,
'Twas those dark-eyed *señoritas*
  As they walked La Punta round.
From the spot where I was standing
  I could see their forms so fair,
'Neath the overhanging *luces* [2]
  Stood revealed their beauty rare.

Ah! thy beauty, *señoritas*
  Is extolled from East to West,
Ready e'er that smile of welcome
  For thy land's enchanted guest.
Fitting mates for brave *señores,*
  Whose renown will never cease,
Heroes in their fight for freedom
  Tasting now the fruits of peace.

Long I stood and watched Havana
  Spreading far beneath my feet,
Clear, those bright reflecting *focos,*[3]
  Traced in white each winding street.

2—Lights. 3—Lamp globes.

Ending in some verdant *plaza* [4]
  With a thousand lights ablaze,
Myriad rows of Chinese lanterns
  Forming one majestic maze.

Tiny streams of coloured water
  Trickled from the fountains there,
While the perfume sweet of roses
  Lingered lightly in the air.
Hidden by the spreading cedars
  Bands of music softly played,
Dreamy waltzes to those lovers
  Who around the *plaza* strayed.

At each corner of those *plazas*
  I could see a small café,
Rendezvous of gay Bohemians
  Laughing life's dull cares away.
One and all true men of genius,
  Each one with his futile dream
Of a world idealistic,
  Of a life which might have been.

Slowly flowing Almendares
  Cleaved the darkened land in twain,
Wand'ring neath the perfumed mangos
  Cov'ring deep Havana's plain,

4—Square.

Singing e'er its endless praises,
  Of that fairest spot on earth,
Far beyond the virgin forest,
  Where the mountains gave it birth.

Bella Cuba . . . Isle of Freedom,
  Brightest jewel in the West,
Purest Pearl of the Antillas,
  Gleaming on the ocean's breast,
Island of the weed enslaving,
  And the waving sugar cane,
Ever may thy sons and daughters
  Their sweet liberty retain!

As I stood enthralled . . . enchanted,
  Deep contentment filled my heart,
  And I vowed my Bella Cuba
  Never from thy shores to part.
But . . . alas . . . mine ears were deafened
  By a factory siren's scream,
And I woke in foggy London,
  Sad to tell 'twas but a dream.

DOLORES

Oh lovely Isle, washed by the western sea,
Hearing thy name sweet mem'ries come to me
Would that I could behold thee once again
Had I but swallow's wings then would I fain
Fly back to thee; but all is dead and gone,
For ever lost in space like that sweet song,
Which dreamy *"Almendares"* sang to me
When parting that sad day, dear Isle, from thee.

It seemed that day as if all nature felt
My parting grief, and when I lowly knelt
Beside Dolores' grave, the wind did cease,
Birds hushed their joyful song and all was peace,
And, as with sinking heart I homeward trod,
Mourning my fate and praying to my God
To help me drink the bitter cup of woe
Which He had given, I heard a murmur low,
Like stormy billows beating on a distant shore,
It kept repeating to me "Thy loved one is no more."

Those cruel words they rent my heart in twain,
I longed to weep, all efforts were in vain,
Would that I had, for my heart sorely tried
Wished short relief in tears, but such relief denied,

The flow of love was stopped, sorrow's seed was
sown
Hatred found its place, my love for man had flown.

That love of which the poets sang is dead,
Its magic work is o'er, its spell has fled,
For when they laid Dolores in her grave
I knew this world had lost all love, save
That which surged so wildly in my breast,
A wondrous love, a love worth all the rest
Of those wild passions felt by other men
Which live a day—my love it hath no end.

Oh! how I loathe this life, this wicked earth
How I detest its gaiety and mirth.
Men stoop the roll of hypocrites to fill
And one believes their studied smiles until
One seeks their promised aid and then one finds
The value of their selfish hearts and minds
Few women are there, who can not be bought
For where gold glitters love it counts as nought,
The sparkling diamond on a scoundrel's hand
Is treasured more than the pure love of man.

Sleeping or waking I think of thee, sweet dove
Why didst thou long to seek thy home above
Was't that my love lacked something long desired
Or was't that thy pure self had quickly tired

Of this benighted world, where life is full of lust,
Where love is but a sham, where men one cannot trust
With aught save secrets dark and vile
Which they guard close so that they may beguile
Their dearest friends—true friendship's seldom seen
Man envies man and greed it reigns supreme.

Why do I rave in such an angry strain,
Thou'art gone for ever, loved one, ne'er again
Shall thy sweet voice, so mellow, stir my dreams
And softly waken me, yet still it seems
That when the shades of even gently fall,
When solitude surrounds me and I call
Upon thee, thou drawest near, and light thy breath
Fans once again my cheek, the thick dark veil of death
Is drawn aside, and in a cloud once more
I see thy face as in those days of yore.

Oh God above, look down with pitying eyes
Upon my wretched self, do not despise
A broken heart, I do not wish to live
Another day, take what Thou me did'st give,
Let me forsake this earth and soar above
Where waits for me my one, my only love.

ADELITA

In a valley near to Lima,
  Stands a chateau drear and bare,
All around is wild profusion
  For 'tis left to nature's care.
Not a sound doth break the stillness
  But the palm trees as they sway,
Or the weirdly hooting night owl,
  And the vulture's croak by day.
There it stands in gloomy silence
  A true emblem of that grief,
Which will fill my heart with suff'ring
  'Till in death I find relief.

Still, when first I saw that villa,
  Youth's blood tingled in my veins,
And I only knew those pleasures,
  Which glittering gold obtains.
Full ignorant of that heaven
  On this earth, which pure love brings,
Of doors, which hide true happiness,
  Yet which love wide open flings.
But the day when on that chateau
  I allowed mine eyes to dwell,
Love's fair goddess had decided
  That I'd feel her magic spell.

How different was the villa,
  Which on that day met my gaze,
As its whitened walls and turrets
  Caught the setting sun's soft rays.
In the paradisial garden
  Sparkling fountains softly played,
Standing 'midst sweet smelling flow'rbeds
  In a thousand tints arrayed.
And those lawns, in perfect keeping,
  Clothed in cool refreshing green,
Lent a true harmonious background
  To what seemed a fairy scene.

Standing wrapped in admiration
  I was startled at the sound
Of a silv'ry peal of laughter,
  Which awoke the stillness 'round.
When from out the garden bower
  Came a maiden dressed in white
While a barking, playful greyhound,
  Leapt around her with delight.
As I watched her drawing closer
  I could feel my heart beat fast,
Something seemed to whisper to me
  That my fate was sealed at last.

Then the sun's rays soft and tender
  Bathed her with its golden light,
I stood spellbound, deeply wond'ring
  If false visions filled my sight.
Such a maid of wondrous beauty
  I ne'er thought had walked this earth,
Nor that lived a one so perfect
  To which woman had given birth.
Such a maid in all her glory,
  Such perfection did not seem
To be real, I thought I'd waken
  Soon to find 'twas but a dream.

Yet the scene turned realistic
  For the dog my form espied,
And abandoning his mistress
  With a bound was at my side.
Then perceiving 'twas a stranger,
  Who to trespass there did dare,
The greyhound paused, and with a snarl
  His glistening teeth did bare.
I put forth my hand to stroke him,
  But he feared me as unknown,
And before I could withdraw it
  I was bitten to the bone.

Examining the teeth-torn wound
  Out of which the blood flowed free,
I noticed not the maid's approach
  'Till I heard her speak to me.
Such sweet tones of apprehension,
  As her sorrow she expressed,
That look of true anxiety
  Would have any wrong redressed.
I was trying to assure her
  'Twas but nought—when from the wood
Near by, emerged an aged man,
  Who approached to where we stood.

In a voice with anger quiv'ring
  Yet with that true courteous air
Of a Spanish *caballero,*
  He enquired my business there.
Then informed of what had happened,
  Rising anger passed away,
And in tones apologetic
  He invited me to stay
And dine with them that evening,
  Meanwhile a neighbouring friend,
Who, he told me, was a doctor,
  Soon would to my wound attend,

When I entered that old chateau
  For a few short hours to stay,
Fate decreed I should not leave it
  'Till a month had passed away.
For a burning, raging fever,
  Rising from the poisonous bite,
And which stayed me from departing,
  Seized me as we dined that night.
Greatly grieved, the maiden's father,
  (So the old man proved to be)
Ordered that the best guest-chamber
  Be prepared at once for me.

As I lay with fever stricken
  Many visions filled my brain,
But the one which kept appearing
  Clearly o'er and o'er again,
Was a face divine, angelic,
  In a frame of golden light,
Which seemed to bathe my chamber
  With its radiance pure and bright.
And again a peal of laughter
  With its silv'ry note so clear,
And a voice so sweet and mellow
  Would re-echo in mine ear.

When at last the fever left me
  All around so changed did seem,
That new world sublime I'd entered,
  Where true love doth reign supreme.
I would lie the whole day list'ning
  For a sound I longed to hear
Even though 'twere but a whisper
  In that voice I loved so dear.
And her footsteps, light and airy,
  As she gayly flittered round,
Made my very blood flow faster,
  And the heart within me bound.

Ah de mi! when convalescent,
  Seated in that garden fair,
Underneath the spreading *palma*
  Shaded from the sun's bright glare,
I would live for those brief moments
  When she'd come to speak to me,
And the time between each coming
  Truly seemed eternity.
Adelita! Adelita!
  Sang the fountains as they played,
And each palm leaf—Adelita!
  Echoed, as it gently swayed.

'Twas evening—'neath the *palma*
  Sat I now with aching heart,
For recovered, I'd decided
  On the morrow to depart.
Adelita was beside me,
  I was bidding her good-bye,
And as the words were spoken
  I thought I heard her sigh.
Then a silence fell upon us,
  Not a sound the ear did greet,
But the dull, unceasing throbbing
  As my heart did wildly beat.

Then I felt my blood rush upwards,
  Cold reasoning fled at last,
In mine arms I found my loved one,
  As a timid bird held fast.
While those vows of love were uttered,
  Which to me are sacred still,
Which will live, true and undying,
  Through this earthly life, until
The open grave doth claim me,
  And my spirit soars above,
Where waits me Adelita,
  My sweet one, my only love.

I could feel her bosom flutt'ring,
  And her warm breath fan my cheek,
Then my heart rose up to choke me,
  As I heard her softly speak.
Shall I e'er forget that moment!
  Nay! I live it o'er and o'er,
Even now I hear that whispered
  *"Ran! *tu eres mi amor.*"
As I pressed her closer to me
  In a world of wondrous bliss,
Burning lips, with love's flame heated,
  Sought relief in one long kiss.

Ah! those nights, when all impatient
  Hidden by that shelt'ring palm,
From the *luna,* pale, resplendent,
  Shining down serene and calm,
I would wait for my love's coming,
  How my blood thrilled at the sight
Of her form, clothed by the moonbeams
  In a *manta,* virgin white.
With the lightness of a fairy
  She would cross the open space,
Which lay between that chateau
  And the palm—our trysting place.

* Ran! thou art my love.

Once again mine arms so gently
  'Round her trembling form would steal,
And again, as close I pressed her,
  Her wild flutt'ring breast I'd feel.
Yea! once more her lips, slight quiv'ring,
  Would unyielding come to mine,
And her snowy arms, so shyly,
  Would around my neck entwine.
Vows repeated, love's words spoken,
  As the time flew swiftly on,
Buenas Noches! Ven Mañana! [1]
  One fond kiss—and she was gone.

But alas!—across the sunshine,
  Of our love 'till then so clear,
Threat'ning clouds which sorrow brooded,
  Quickly started to appear.
For one night with tears of anguish,
  'Tween her sobs of heartfelt grief,
Of a cruel act she told me,
  In its harshness past belief.
That same day, she said, her father
  Had agreed to give her hand
To a wealthy *Peruano,*
  Owner of the neighb'ring land.

1—Good-night! come to-morrow!

Though with hopeful words endeavoured
  I my weeping love to cheer,
Still my heart turned cold within me
  As her story I did hear.
For her father was a victim
  To that cursed gambling vice,
And he'd have my Adelita
  Sacrificed to pay the price
Of such debts, owed to my rival,
  But I vowed 'twas not to be,
'Though my life should pay the forfeit
  From this bond I'd set her free.

We were seeking fleeting comfort
  In what proved our last embrace,
When a figure came towards us
  From across that open space.
With a cry my Adelita
  Quickly fled into the night,
And I found my angry rival
  Standing there before my sight.
From surprise not yet recovered,
  And before I'd time to speak,
With his cane a blow he struck me,
  Cutting deep into my cheek.

At that blow rose up the curtain
  On a tragedy of life,
Which I hope will ne'er be equalled
  In this sordid world of strife.
On the lawn of that fair garden,
  Aided by the *luna's* light,
Promptly crossed we our *espadas,*[2]
  Eager to the death to fight.
As blade met blade and cautiously
  Subtle thrust and par were made
Realized I that my rival
  Was an expert with the blade.

Then I knew that if I pressed him
  Of my death there'd be no doubt,
So I stood on the defensive,
  I had planned to wear him out.
My past life of moderation
  Natural strength had duly stored,
Which now pitted 'gainst my rival
  An advantage did afford.
For years of sensual habits
  Had fair sapped him to the bone,
(He, who sins against his body,
  Through his body must atone.)

2—Swords.

Twice his blade did lightly touch me,
  Drawing blood from arm and side,
Yet to pass his guard so steady
  All my efforts he defied.
But as lunge and thrust were parried
  I could hear him gasp for breath,
And his face, by the pale moonlight,
  I could see was white as death.
Then at last I felt him weaken,
  And there came into his eyes
That strange look of deadly horror
  As a coward 'fore he dies.

It was then I pressed him closely,
  Inch by inch he yielded ground,
While the clashing of our sword blades
  Filled the peaceful air around.
Step by step he now retreated,
  For his strength was ebbing fast,
'Cross that open space I drove him
  'Till we reached the palm at last.
It was then that I determined
  He must from this world depart,
One straight thrust—too weakly parried—
  And he fell pierced to the heart.

I stooped down to hear if faintly
  From his lips escaped a breath,
But his eyes looked at the *luna,*
  Fixed in that cold stare of death.
On the spot, where he had struck me,
  Silent, grim, a corpse he lay,
For that cow'rdly blow, that insult,
  With his life he'd had to pay.
From my breast I'd drawn my *capa*
  Quick to hide the ghastly sight,
When the climax, dire and dreadful,
  Came to end that tragic night.

A faint sound, and looking upwards,
  There before my startled gaze,
Stood my Adelita's father,
  But what filled me with amaze
Was to see held out towards me
  Two *pistolas* [3]—and his voice,
In accents, calm, deliberate,
  Bidding me to make my choice.
I tried to speak, I could not,
  For my lips were fettered tight,
As in bitter tones he told me
  I must either die or fight.

3—Pistols.

Was he not my loved one's father?
  If I chanced to take his life
It would blight all hopes of gaining
  Adelita for my wife.
In a daze I took the weapon,
  Then ten paces did retire,
But before I stepped the distance
  I'd decided not to fire.
Far better dead than live a life
  Being but one great remorse,
Clearly in this sad dilemma
  I could only choose one course.

It meant cold death, oblivion,
  Yet I'd comfort in the thought
(Though I would not live to share it)
  My Love's freedom had been bought.
That my last words should be of her,
  When death's angel to me came,
I turned to face the bullet
  Murm'ring low her own sweet name.
And the night breeze passing over,
  On its wings a message bore,
It kept repeating to me
  "Ran! *tu eres mi amor.*"

One bright flash—no bullet reached me,
  God! had mine eyes seen aright!
One brief moment there between us
  Stood a vision clothed in white.
From my lips a cry of horror
  Pierced the stilly air around,
For I saw the vision stagger
  Then fall forward to the ground.
And, light-kissed the pallid features,
  From the moonlight from above,
Recognized I in that vision
  Adelita—my own love.

Need I tell you of my anguish
  As I knelt beside her form,
While the cold ground turned to crimson
  With her ebbing blood so warm.
Mad with grief I pressed her to me,
  From my lips wild words did pour,
Then I heard her faintly whisper
  "Ran! *tu eres mi amor.*"
While with one last dying effort
  Those soft arms my neck entwined,
One last kiss, then smiling gently,
  She her soul to God resigned.

Though my story's almost ended,
  There remains for me to tell
Of the last act in that drama,
  Just before the curtain fell.
I was bending o'er my loved one,
  In the ravings of despair,
When another shot, close to me,
  Sharp vibrated through the air.
And again a lifeless body
  Stretched itself on that green sod,
It was Adelita's father,
  He had gone to meet his God.

As I sit alone, deep musing,
  Those past scenes return so clear.
From out the deep'ning shadows
  One fair vision doth appear.
Then the blood leaps through my body
  For I seem to hear once more
A voice, low whispering to me,
  "Ran! *tu eres mi amor.*"
I stretch out mine arms to clasp her
  For 'tis My Beloved, Mine Own,
Quickly fades the vision from me
  And once more I am alone.

O'er and o'er, when the meek *luna*
  Spreads around her *manta* white,
My life's tragedy's repeated
  Vividly, as on that night.
The loud clashing of our sword blades
  Seems the peaceful air to fill,
Once again ring out those *tiros* [4]
  And I see those forms so still.
With my hands mine eyes I cover,
  But to hide it is in vain,
For that scene, with all its horrors,
  Is impressed upon my brain.

In my waking thoughts I see it,
  In my dreams it comes to me,
Ev'ry day of my existence
  Is one long eternity.
Come to me my Adelita!
  Yet thou hearest not my cry,
For to me my Adelita
  Has long said her last Goodbye.
Would that God in all his mercy,
  Take from me the life he gave,
And let me seek for ever
  Sweet oblivion in the grave!

4—Shots.

ADIÓS

Adiós! ye fair Republics,
  Regions of the dark-eyed *gente,*[1]
Land of the noon *siesta,*[2]
  And climate *caliente,*[3]
Coast of the glitt'ring coral,
  Where myriad sea-birds mew,
Mañana[4] . . . to thy sun-kissed shores
  I'll bid my last adieu.

Farewell, . . . ye *señoritas,*[5]
  Of beauty past comparing,
Salud[6] . . . proud *caballeros,*[7]
  Renowned for deeds of daring.
Home of the *bienvenida,*[8]
  And flatt'ring *cortesia,*[9]
Life of the wild *romanza,*[10]
  Land of the *poesia.*[11]

No more I'll watch thy sunsets,
  Nor see thy blue *cielo,*[12]
No more I'll drink concoctions
  Of *"frescos con hielo."*[13]

1—People. 2—Short sleep. 3—Warm. 4—To-morrow. 5—Maidens. 6—Health. 7—Getlemen. 8—Welcome. 9—Courtesy. 10—Romance. 11—Poetry. 12—Sky. 13—Iced drinks.

With leaden skies above
  Throughout the gloomy year,
I'll watch the drizzle falling,
  And drink plain English beer.

Goodbye . . . the hour of parting,
  Is quickly drawing near,
Down o'er the far horizon
  Thy shores will disappear.
Oft, when I'm back in England
  'Neath driving sleet and snow,
I'll think of this *tierra*[14]
  Where the Western Breezes blow.

Adiós . . . my *buen amigos*,[15]
  Accept this trifling token,
Heed not, if in my pratings
  Of thee I've lightly spoken.
'Tis but the jest of a *gringo,*
  Who has missed his true vocation,
High . . . 'till the devil claims me,
  Thou'lt stand in my estimation.

14—Land. 15—Good friends.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

NON-RENEWABLE

FEB 1 2 1992

ILL/JRC

DUE 2 WKS FROM DATE RECEIVED

RNIA

PS Atkin -
3501 Western breezes.
A867w

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 919 240 2

PS
3501
A867w

Univer
Sout
Lib